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THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

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THOMAS DE QUINCEY:

HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

With Unpublished Correspondence.

BY

H. A. PAGE,

AUTHOR OF "MEMOIR OF HAWTHORNE," "GOLDEN LIVES," "FABLES FOR OLD AND YOUNG," ETC. ETC.

23059

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

AX.O. 6

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THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. HOGG'S REMINISCENCES.

IT was in the autumn of the year 1849 that I first saw Thomas de Quincey. At that period, much of my time was taken up in connection with "Hogg's Instructor," and owing to an accident that had occurred in our printing-office, we had partially betaken ourselves to temporary and somewhat out-of-the-way premises at Canonmills, in the vicinity of Edinburgh. As I was attending to some matters in this office, I was informed that a gentleman urgently wished to see me. Going down, I was confronted by a noticeably small figure, attired in a capacious garment which was much too large, and which served the purpose of both under and overcoat. Although I was well acquainted with the fame and writings of Thomas de Quincey, and had read accounts of his personal appearance, the figure now before me failed to realise the idea I had formed of the English Opium-

Eater. It was some time before the extreme refinement of the face was noticed—not, indeed, till the voice, gentle, clear, and silvery, began to be heard; when the eye ceased to be diverted by a certain oddity in the general appearance, and was attracted by the brow which, from its prominence, gave an aspect of almost childlike smallness to the under face, and by the eyes, which combined a singular power of quiet scrutiny with a sort of dreamy softness that suggested something of weariness.

With an air of quiet good breeding, he told me who he was, and the object of his visit, which was to offer me an article for the "Instructor." He expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which that work had been conducted; said he was pleased with its non-political and non-sectarian character; and, if there was a vacancy on the staff, he would like to become an occasional contributor.

I was much pleased at the offer of the services of so distinguished a writer. The contribution which he had brought with him was forthwith drawn from the capacious inner pocket of his coat; but, before being handed to me, I was both surprised and amused at a small handbrush being drawn from the same receptacle, and the manuscript carefully brushed before it was handed to me. This operation was one which I afterwards found that he invariably performed. The contribution was then and there accepted.

I remember asking him on this occasion how he meant to return to Lasswade. He replied, "I shall, as usual, walk;—from this point it is only about ten miles; it is now only six o'clock, and I shall reach home about nine." This will show that on this

occasion he must have walked twenty miles in his journey from Lasswade and back.

One visit led to another, and before long the connection became so intimate, that I either saw him or heard from him at short intervals—an intimacy which, I am glad to say, consolidated as time went on, and remained unbroken till the last hour.

The project of the collected works was talked of in the earlier stages of our acquaintance, and I remember well the remarks which reached me from various quarters when I announced the series.* It was said that I was engaging in an undertaking which I would never be able to complete—that others had tried it and failed, and that I would succeed no better than they had done. I might, perhaps, get a volume printed, but that would be all. But I persevered, and, by dint of patience and a way of humouring him, I succeeded. I soon discovered, however, that it was almost impossible to overrate difficulties—his whole constitution and habit of mind were averse from sustained and continuous work of the kind. He was constantly being caught with new plans, and when I was desirous of pushing on the publication of the works, would entertain me with the most ingenious devices and speculations—sometimes alighting on really practical needs, the supplying of which would have done something towards a fortune. I soon found out that it was

* It was well known, and had been publicly intimated in the *Eclectic Review*, that no collection of his works revised by himself would ever appear, as the author, owing to age and ill health, had declined to accede to the request of several publishers that he should prepare such a collection.—Ed.

of no use to show impatience—that the causes of delay were for the most part beyond his control; that he did not lack the will to make efforts, but the power, and that the power was most amenable when he was left unharassed. A gentle reminder, an indirect suggestion, rather than an expression of one's disappointment, was the most efficient spur to his will; for he was sympathetic and appreciative of gentleness beyond all men I have ever known.*

In 1840, he had leased a pretty little cottage called Mavis Bush, at Lasswade, situated on the brow of one of the declivities leading to the river Esk, where he lived with his daughters in quiet and comfort. Now that he was engaged on a work which required his presence more frequently in Edinburgh, he began to discover manifold grievances, real or imaginary, in living at such a distance from the press. For a time he persevered in walking in and out—the double journey being about fourteen miles. He was never inclined to favour coaches, finding himself thrown into companionships he did not relish.†

* The notes from Mr. de Quincey's own hand which appear in the succeeding chapter will serve to show how the work progressed. These notes have been culled from many others of a similar character.

† In that most exquisite and humorous piece of criticism on Landor, titled "Milton *versus* Southey and Landor," he thus, in throwing some ridicule on "Over-colonisation" as the lesson of "Gebir," interjects what is in reality an autobiographic touch:—"I, indeed, knew a case, but Dalica did *not*, of over-colonisation. It was the case, which even yet occurs on out-of-the-way roads, where a man unjustly big mounts into the inside of a stage-coach already sufficiently crowded. In streets and squares, where men could give him a wide berth, they had tolerated the

He so often arrived at my place of business late in the afternoon, that it would almost seem as if he preferred walking home from Edinburgh to Lasswade after dark—an impression confirmed by an amusing provision which he hit upon for illumination at a somewhat perilous stage in the journey. The river Esk, at certain parts of its course, runs between somewhat steep and craggy embankments. On the route he preferred to take there was a small foot-bridge not very far from his own house, which was so narrow that there was some risk in attempting to cross it in the darkness. He therefore procured a small lantern which he lit before leaving Edinburgh, and carried in his pocket. But to his utter consternation, several times running it went out, as if by some fatality, just as he approached the fragile foot-bridge. He, therefore, abandoned the lantern in some disappointment. He has himself given an illustration of the great distance practically between Lasswade and Edinburgh in a playful introduction to one of his essays, published in 1852. But playful as it is, the miseries to which he was subjected were real enough, in his regard, as the reader may guess:—

"It is a fact that I can send a letter to Astrachan,

---

iniquity of his person; but now, in a chamber so confined, the length and breadth of his wickedness shines revealed to every eye. And if the coach should upset, which it would not be the less likely to do for having *him* on board, somebody or other (perhaps myself) must lie beneath this monster, like Enceladus under Mount Etna, calling upon Jove to come quickly with a thunderbolt, and destroy both man and mountain, both *sucubus* and *incubus*, if no other relief offered."—Ed.

or even to Bokhara (and, indeed, I meditate a letter to Bokhara, filled with reproaches to the Sultan, whom I particularly detest), much more easily than I can plant a note in the hands of my publisher, or his compositors. Once posted, the letter to Bokhara, like an arrow dismissed from a bow, will assuredly find out the Sultan, without further 'fash' on *my* part, and will cause a festering in his villanous heart;* and he can have no pretence for complaining of me to the Court of St. James's, since I shall pay the postage to the last farthing. Fluent as the flight of a swallow is the Sultan's letter; whereas, the letter to my publisher describes a path that is zigzag, discontinuous, moving through harsh angles, and intersected at every turn by human negligences, and by inhuman treacheries of coachmen. The Sultan presents a point-blank mark to my bullet; but, to hit my publisher, I must fire round a corner, or, indeed, round three corners at once. . . . . It seems to follow that, unless my publisher could be prevailed on kindly to 'flit' to Bokhara, there is no great prospect of opening a direct or rapid communication with him. . . . . By reason of his procrastination in fixing himself at Bokhara, the correspondence with him is in that condition of circuitousness and liability to *rests* (which are very good in music, but shameful and disgusting in the post-office), that three-fourths of the time otherwise disposable for my paper, perishes in holes and

* And all of us detest him reasonably, who remember his treatment of poor Stoddart and Conolly, for no crime alleged but that of trusting to the hospitality and justice of his savage land.

corners amongst the embezzlements of the road; and every contraction in the *rations* allowed as to hours and minutes regularly shows itself, in a corresponding expansion of hurry and inevitable precipitancy, as regards the quality of the composition."

This fancied delay in communication led to his taking lodgings in Edinburgh, where he would be near to the press. I shall not soon forget the aspect which his rooms came to wear before they had been long occupied by him. Boxes of papers filled the corners, and papers lay scattered on every available bit of flat surface; books and magazines piled indiscriminately tier on tier against the wall from the floor; his very table so littered as scarcely to allow him a corner to write upon—the available space for this and other purposes being no bigger than a sheet of letter-paper. Soon obstacles and delays arose here as at Lasswade, and all the old process of humouring and gentle hastening were again found necessary. His incapacity to stick to work was increased by his nervous dread of putting others to inconvenience, or causing them loss or suffering. Though he had little of the passion for fine books which afflicts some scholars, he was pursued by a Chinese-like reverence for written or printed paper. Newspapers and magazines, which reached him from all parts of the world, he preserved with religious care; even his MSS. which had been printed he preserved; and his habit of making notes on loose slips of paper i the course of his reading, and depositing them among the papers, rendered those heaps to be valuable in his eyes, though they were so rather as containing thin veins of gold than as

being throughout golden. But only he himself could have told what was valuable, as the notes were not seldom wholly unintelligible to any one else; and the laborious process of sorting was often deferred, while he clung to his gatherings almost with childlike pertinacity. Nay, he was wont to drag such heaps from place to place with him, whereby arose some of the oddest accidents perhaps on record.

On one occasion when he was about to pay a visit to Professor Lushington in Glasgow, he resolved he would do a great deal of work while enjoying the quiet and comfort of his esteemed friend's home. Accordingly, he had two tea-chests filled with such papers, and these he took with him. On reaching Glasgow, he placed the chests under the care of a porter to convey to his destination; he, apparently, proceeding with the porter to guard them. Having gone so far, the porter found that his load was heavier than he had bargained for; and either he or De Quincey suggested that it would be well to leave the boxes in some place near at hand. A bookseller's shop was espied not far off, and to that the two betook themselves. The bookseller agreed to allow the two chests house-room for a short time, and they were accordingly left with him. But De Quincey had omitted to note the name, the number of the shop, or even the name of the street, and was never able to find the place. On his return to Edinburgh, he mourned over the irreparable loss of his valuable papers; and after a considerable time, when he had quite given them up as lost for ever, I wrote to a friend in Glasgow detailing the circumstances, and

asking whether he would take the trouble to send round to the booksellers', inquiring if any such boxes had been left with either of them. To my astonishment, my friend succeeded in ferreting out the precious packages; and De Quincey's look of pleased surprise may be imagined when I directed his attention to them in my office, as I asked, "Do you know these boxes?" He stood for a moment as if petrified, and unable to say anything; and on my asking him what should be done with them, he said, "Send them to Lothian Street," where probably they lay unopened for another period as long, and when opened at last, were not found to contain such valuables as he had fancied.

I remember another occasion, when I accompanied him to have his daguerreotype taken. The studio of the daguerreotype artist was in Princes Street; and, returning by way of the High Street, we were overtaken by a severe thunderstorm, which drove us into Paxton's Royal Exchange Hotel for shelter. While there having a basin of soup, the waiter, after closely scrutinising my companion, gently touched him on the arm, and said, "I think, sir, I have a bundle of papers which you left here some time ago." A parcel was accordingly produced, which, sure enough, proved to be papers belonging to De Quincey. It then turned out that my friend had slept at this hotel some twelve months before, and on that occasion had confided these papers to the waiter, asking him to keep them till he called for them.

Apropos of this same daguerreotype, an engraving from which appeared in "Hogg's Instructor," I received from De Quincey the following humorous

letter, which was printed in the "Instructor" for March 1851, but is, I think, in so rich and characteristic a vein as to deserve insertion here:—

"*To the Editor of 'Hogg's Instructor.'*

"*September* 21, 1850.

"My Dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for communicating to us (that is, to my daughters and myself) the engraved portrait, enlarged from the daguerreotype original. The engraver, at least, seems to have done his part ably. As to one of the earlier artists concerned—viz., the sun of July—I suppose it is not allowable to complain of him, else my daughters are inclined to upbraid him with having made the mouth too long. But, of old, it was held audacity to suspect the sun's veracity:—'Solem quis discere falsum audeat!' And I remember that, half a century ago, the 'Sun' newspaper, in London, used to fight under sanction of that motto. But it was at length discovered by the learned, that 'Sun' *junior*, viz., the newspaper, *did* sometimes indulge in fibbing. The ancient prejudice about the solar truth broke down, therefore, in that instance; and who knows but sun *senior* may be detected, now that our optical glasses are so much improved, in similar practices? in which case he may have only been 'keeping his hand in' when operating upon that one feature of the mouth. The rest of the portrait, we all agree, does credit to his talents, showing that he is still wide-awake, and not at all the superannuated old artist that some speculators in philosophy had dreamed of his becoming.

"As an accompaniment to the portrait, your wish

is that I should furnish a few brief chronological memoranda of my own life. *That* would be hard for me to do, and, when done, might not be very interesting for others to read. Nothing makes such dreary and monotonous reading as the old hackneyed roll-call, chronologically arrayed, of inevitable facts in a man's life. One is so certain of the man's having been born, and also of his having died, that it is dismal to be under the necessity of reading it. That the man began by being a boy—that he went to school—and that by intense application to his studies, 'which he took to be *his* portion in this life,' he rose to distinction as a robber of orchards, seems so probable, upon the whole, that I am willing to accept it as a postulate. That he married—that, in fulness of time, he was hanged, or (being a humble, unambitious man) that he was content with deserving it—these little circumstances are so naturally to be looked for, as sown broadcast up and down the great fields of biography, that any one life becomes, in this respect, but the echo of thousand . Chronologic successions of events and dates, such as these, which, belonging to the race, illustrate nothing in the individual, are as wearisome as they are useless.

"A better plan will be to detach some single chapter from the experiences of childhood, which is likely to offer at least this kind of value—either that it will record some of the deep impressions under which my childish sensibilities expanded, and the ideas which at that time brooded continually over my mind, or else will expose the traits of character that slumbered in those around me. This plan will have the advan-

tage of not being liable to the suspicion of vanity or egotism; for I beg the reader to understand distinctly, that I do not offer this sketch as deriving any part of what interest it may have from myself, as the person concerned in it. If the particular experience selected is really interesting, in virtue of its own circumstances, then it matters not to *whom* it happened. Suppose that a man should record a perilous journey, it will be no fair inference that he records it as a journey performed by himself. Most sincerely he may be able to say that he records it not for that relation to himself, but *in spite* of that relation. The incidents, being absolutely independent, in their power to amuse, of all personal reference, must be equally interesting [he will say] whether they occurred to A. or to B. That is *my* case. Let the reader abstract from *me* as a person that by accident, or in some partial sense, may have been previously known to himself. Let him read the sketch as belonging to one who wishes to be profoundly anonymous. I offer it, not as owing anything to its connection with a particular individual, but as likely to be amusing separately for itself; and if I make any mistake in *that*, it is not a mistake of vanity exaggerating the consequence of what relates to my own childhood, but a simple mistake of the judgment as to the power of amusement that may attach to a particular succession of reminiscences.

"Excuse the imperfect development which in some places of the sketch may have been given to my meaning. I suffer from a most afflicting derangement of the nervous system, which at times makes it difficult for me to write at all, and always makes

me impatient, in a degree not easily understood, of recasting what may seem insufficiently or even incoherently expressed.—Believe me, ever yours,

"THOMAS DE QUINCEY."

This was followed by the first portion of what now appears in the "Collected Works," under the title of "Autobiographic Sketches." After the second paper in the series appeared, an interval of eight months elapsed ere the succeeding portion was obtained; and as the continuation was looked forward to with much interest by the readers of the "Instructor," numerous letters on the subject reached me. Some of these I gave to Mr. de Quincey, and this led to the following characteristic introduction which preceded the third section ("Hogg's Instructor," January 1852):—

"I understand that several readers of my 'Sketch from Childhood' (published heretofore in this journal), have lodged complaints against me for not having pursued it to what they can regard as a satisfactory close. Some may have done this in a gentle tone, as against an irreclaimable procrastinator, amiably inclined perhaps to penitence, though constitutionally incapable of amendment; but others more clamorously, as against one faithless to his engagements, and deliberately a defaulter. Themselves they regard in the light of creditors, and me as a slippery debtor, who, having been permitted to pay his debts by instalments—three, suppose, or four—has paid two, and then absconded in order to evade the rest. Certainly to this extent I go along with them myself, that in all cases of a tale or story moving through the regular stages of a plot, the

writer, by the act of publishing the introductory parts, pledges himself to unweave the whole tissue to the last. The knot that he has tied, though it should prove a very Gordian knot, he is bound to untie. And if he fails to do so, I doubt whether a reader has not a right of action against him for having wantonly irritated a curiosity that was never meant to be gratified—for having trifled with his feelings—and, possibly, for having distressed and perplexed his moral sense; as, for instance, by entangling the hero and heroine (two young people that can be thoroughly recommended for virtue) in an Irish bog of misfortunes, and there leaving them to their fate—the gentleman up to his shoulders, and the poor lady, therefore, in all probability, up to her lips. But in a case like the present, where the whole is offered as a *sketch*, an action would not lie. A sketch, by its very name, is understood to be a fragmentary thing: it is a *torso*, which may want the head, or the feet, or the arms, and still remain a marketable piece of sculpture. In buying a horse, you may look into his mouth, but not in buying a *torso*, for, if all his teeth have been gone for ten centuries, which would certainly operate in the way of discount upon the price of a horse, very possibly the loss would be urged as a good ground for an *extra* premium upon the *torso*. Besides, it is hard to see how any proper *end* could be devised for a paper of this nature, reciting a few incidents, sad and gay, from the records of a half-forgotten childhood, unless by putting the child to death; for which *dénouement*, unhappily, there was no solid historical foundation.

"Right or wrong, however, my accusers are en-

titled to my gratitude; since in the very fact of their anger is involved a compliment. By proclaiming their indignation against the procrastinating or absconding sketcher, they proclaim their interest in the sketch; and, therefore, if any fierce Peter Peebles should hang upon my skirts, hauling me back to work, and denouncing me to the world as a fugitive from my public duties, I shall not feel myself called upon to contradict him. As often as he nails me with the charge of being a skulker from work *in meditatione fugæ*, I shall turn round and nail him with the charge of harbouring an intense admiration for me, and putting a most hyperbolical value upon my services; or else why should he give himself so much trouble, after so many months are gone by, in pursuing and recapturing me? On this principle, I shall proceed with others who may have joined the cry of the accusers, obediently submitting to their pleasure, doing my best, therefore, to supply a conclusion which in my own eyes had not seemed absolutely required, and content to bear the utmost severity of their censure as applied to myself the workman, in consideration of the approbation which that censure carries with it by implication to the work itself."

I have mentioned the cases of the tea-chests and the parcel of papers to illustrate his absent-mindedness and simplicity, which, however, sometimes led to his being sadly imposed upon and subjected to great annoyance. I know of one instance, in which people who had become possessed of papers of his, and who got money from him on delivering them, came professing to have found more papers of great

value, and who, after getting the sum demanded, left a worthless packet, mostly of straw neatly done up in many folds of paper! Indeed, it may be said that, from his peculiar habits of gathering, and his incapacity to make practical arrangements, he left papers and packages of a somewhat mixed nature behind him in most places where he had stayed; which circumstance caused him to be sought out and followed in after years by those who probably would not else have borne him so long in mind. I believe that during these last years I was on such a footing of intimacy with him that I heard something of every landlady he had ever lived with in Edinburgh. Putting aside the case of Miss M——, who presented an exorbitant claim for ordinary rent when she had merely given house-room for a period of time to some papers, there were only three instances of landladies following him; and it may not be out of place to mention them here. There was, first, Miss ——, with whom he had lodged for some time. When she heard that the "Collected Works" were being published, she came to me, and begged me to receive some papers which she had carefully kept for several years. She always believed that they were of great value, as De Quincey had told her, and asked me to relieve her of all responsibility respecting them. I accordingly did so; and at the first opportunity restored them to Mr. de Quincey. But no claim whatever was put forward by Miss ——, simply a desire to deliver into the proper hands what she understood was valuable. De Quincey, I learned, had, however, left the house under some hallucination as to indebtedness to her.

The next case was that of Mrs. ——, from whom De Quincey had rooms for a considerable period, though I know that on one occasion he went out, as though for his customary walk, but did not return at his usual time. The truth is, he had gone to see a friend, under whose roof he stayed for some months; but, returning, he walked into the rooms as though he had only left them that morning. In this instance, also, he left papers behind him; and, as in the former case, Mrs. —— came to me and requested me to take charge of them, which I did.

These were instances of people of good principle and good feeling. But there was one case of persons with whom De Quincey had come into contact as a lodger who did not act in the same way. Here again he left papers behind him; but in this instance the opportunity was seized to make something by them. Knowing the value—whether real or imaginary—that De Quincey always attached to his papers (and indeed sometimes it would have been difficult, as I have already said, for himself to tell their value), Mrs. ——, with the aid of her family, resorted to various devices to harass and extort money from him. I will not disguise that it was to this family I referred when I spoke above of the "bogus" packets on which they endeavoured to raise money. They never had and never made a claim for arrears; but pled poverty, and by promising to bring valuable papers they over and over got small sums of money. But only sometimes did the promised papers come. Of the characters of these people and their transactions I have good reason to know; for after having been again and again vic-

timised by them in this way, De Quincey was at last compelled to refuse to see them any more, and asked me, as a great favour, to take them in hand, and to see whether they really had anything of value, as he acknowledged he was unequal to deal with them. This I willingly agreed to do, and luckily I still have in my possession private documents that would suffice to show not only that they had no claim whatever upon him, but that they added to their pretence of holding valuable papers appeals to his charitable sympathies. In fact, they went so far as to try to touch his feelings by feigning death in the family, the more readily to get advances from him on the promise of the delivery of papers. In the last resort, I arranged with De Quincey to pay a small sum, if I was satisfied that the remaining papers they had were of such value as was represented, and that they would be delivered to me as promised. I feel it necessary, in corroboration of these statements, to produce here a letter which I would not otherwise have felt at liberty to print, and do so now only under a sense of justice to the memory of De Quincey:—

EDINBURGH, 2*d Sept.* 1854.

MR. DE QUINCEY, SIR,—In accordance with your request, I have made out the enclosed items, money for which I would want for my mother's funeral. She is to be buried to-morrow at four o'clock, and would like things settled as early as possible to-day. All the responsibility rests with me.

This letter was immediately forwarded to me (marked "to be returned," which words were struck out, and "please to keep this" inserted in their stead) with the following comment:—

My Dear Sir,—I am pretty sure that Mr. ——— ——— will call on you in consequence of my failure to call on *him* at two o'clock. Would you have been so kind in that case as to advance him the additional £1, which you gave him reason to expect, *he pledging his word to bring the remaining papers on Monday.** At the same time, would you *also* give him the enclosed sum of 25 shillings. And in any extreme case, perhaps, you would use your own discretion as to advancing him a trifle more, which, of course, I will make good.

Considering the footing on which I stood with Mr. de Quincey during the last ten years of his life,—being admitted to him at all hours and in all moods, "grave and gay," I believe I had opportunities of knowing more about his affairs than any one, excepting his own family,—it is quite impossible, from what I have related, that if there had been a "tracking from lodging to lodging," and persistent purloining of papers on the plea of arrears of rent, as has been recently represented, I should not have heard of it.

During the time that he lived in Lothian Street, I can say that he was attended to by his landlady and her sister—Mrs. Wilson and Miss Stark, with whom he had lodged at a former period—in such a manner as to have called forth from him the utmost respect, consideration, and sympathy. In proof of this I need only mention that, during his last illness, Miss Stark was the attendant who is so touchingly spoken of by Dr. Warburton Begbie in his account of the last days, which appears at the end of this volume.

Suffering he could not see without making some effort to relieve it—if he had money there was no

* The italics here are mine.—J. H.

calculation of results (in this certainly failing to illustrate some of his ideas in political economy). In spite of his shrewd discernment of character, I am not sure that he was not victimised by those who can whine—at all events, he was utterly indifferent to money, and was not seldom himself in straits from his unstinted, if not reckless, liberality. I mention these matters as I cannot well otherwise explain one very beautiful trait in his character as exhibited in my contact with him. If he came to me with an unfinished paper—which he often did—it was my habit to give him the money he wished for it, and patiently to wait his own time for the remainder. His utter honour and honesty were seen in this, that these papers were, with a solitary exception, ultimately finished and given to me. And the underlying sense of his own helplessness in practical matters was sometimes brought out with a peculiar mixture of the pathetic and the humorous. He did not care for receiving large sums of money at once—preferring it in small sums as he required them; and he was positively put about by having anything to do with cheques. On one occasion when I had given him a cheque for some £30, to balance his account to a particular date, he put the cheque into one or other of his pockets and went away. In a short time he returned, in great concern, saying that he must have dropped it, vigorously re-performing the labour of search as he spoke, by turning his pockets inside out. I said to him, "It doesn't matter, I shall at once send over to the bank and stop payment"—on which assurance he looked greatly relieved, and went away. But in a few minutes he

returned again to tell me, that, after all, he had found it at the bottom of that capacious side-pocket of his coat already referred to; and he urged me to take back the cheque, and give him a portion of the sum in cash—the remainder to be paid to him as he required it.

It has been said that he had no interest in the passing topics of the day. No greater mistake than this has ever been committed in the description of the character of Thomas de Quincey. It is true that he took little or no interest in purely political party-squabbles; and it may sound surprising to say that a man who lived almost the life of a recluse, and who showed in many practical matters so much of a child-like simplicity and incapacity, should take not only a lively interest in great questions, but speak of them with deep enthusiasm, and with shrewdest insight, and often bring great principles to bear on bewildering details in a most original way. In all great questions that affected the welfare of the country, his discernment as to what might be the results of any given course was truly wonderful. Indeed, in many smaller matters, from a boxing-match to a murder surrounded by mysteries, he was equally at home. I recollect cases of the latter description, where long before the messengers of justice had tracked out the missing links in the chain of evidence, precisely the same thing had previously been pointed out to me by my friend. I need only refer here, by way of illustration, to his essay on "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts."

I remember, too, the chronic excitement in which, as I may say, he lived throughout the period of the

Indian Mutiny, surrounding himself with piles of documents of all sorts on the subject. He had a son engaged in it, and his son-in-law, Colonel Baird Smith, was the chief of the Engineer staff at Delhi; and ties of that kind could not have failed to quicken his interest. During the many years that I was so closely associated with him, this was the only occasion on which I ever saw his gentle nature roused to indignation. I recollect how intently he watched for the arrival of fresh tidings, and the horror he evinced at the massacre of innocent women and children. For a time, indeed, he was so thoroughly absorbed in the progress of the Mutiny, that he could not well apply himself to anything else.

His writings, as dealt with in this Memoir, must have shown how anxiously he viewed the great crises that arose during his lifetime in the history of his country. Some passages in his Essays—full of energy, originality, and character—were thrown out of the "Collected Writings," simply because they passed into the discussion of purely temporary questions.

His conversational powers were truly wonderful. He would start away from the most ordinary and commonplace point or fact, and by a process gradual, yet not to be traced out fully to one's satisfaction afterwards, he would rise to the highest poetry. This characteristic has been often noticed; but there was another which I do not remember to have seen so prominently pointed out. It was this: that often in conversation with him, you were seized with doubt whether he was not hoaxing you and hoaxing himself at the same time, so absurd were many of the propositions propounded with an air of gravity

and assurance of conviction unparalleled. Such projects were so deliberately referred to again and again, that, though at first you humoured him by a kindly acquiescence, feeling that they were mere dreams and half hoaxes, yet a certain element of seriousness arose from the very persistency with which he pursued them. I will give one example. Though he was now over seventy years of age, and was engaged with the "Collected Works," of which some three volumes were still to do, he would entertain me with details of a magnificent project to do the greatest work that had ever been done—the "History of England" in twelve volumes. The history of England, he said, never had been written as it should be written. Froude's History was the only one that approached his ideal; and he gave the impression that several popular histories were not of much account in his mind. When I asked him about the time we should need to live to see this done, he would say: "The 'Collected Works' will be finished by such and such a date; I shall knock them off quickly so as to let me begin. Provided that you undertake the narrative portion of the work, I will follow up with the pictorial description of all prominent characters. We can thus easily produce three volumes in a year, so that it could be done in four years at furthest." And so, with persistent repetition, he would dwell on his great scheme, and go over and over its details, adding another theme to that endless subject—"Memoirs of the Unborn," which he himself once thought of writing. It is true, we never proceeded so far as to fix the size or style of the volumes!

Unlike most authors, Mr. de Quincey rarely had occasion to consult the authorities from whom he quoted. Had he required to do so, what he conceived to be insurmountable difficulties would have appeared before him, as the chief portion of his library remained at Lasswade, while those books which were beside him were either stowed away in boxes, or were immured amid the *débris* which surrounded him. These obstacles, I believe, much intensified the powers of a naturally marvellously retentive memory. When any question arose as to the accuracy of a quotation, he was in the habit of throwing back his head on his chair, shutting his eyes, and remaining for a time perfectly motionless as if asleep. In such cases I found myself thinking, "Now he is engaged in overhauling the contents of that wonderfully capacious memory." If it was a line of poetry on which the doubt had arisen, he usually, as it were, awoke quoting the stanza complete in which the line occurred. With the Greek poets he was as familiar as with the English, and when in the course of his reading he came upon a Greek quotation with an accent misplaced or awanting, he at once detected it. Even in cases where authors disagree as to the spelling of words, he readily referred to where these differences occurred. As an instance, take the following in reply to a query by the printer as to the word "caligraphy" being found with one "l" and again with two, which also may serve to show the trouble he took to verify everything:—

"According to all analogy I should have expected the word to be written with a single "l," the adjective

καλος being so uniformly spelt with a single λ; and resting upon this consideration I had in one of the proofs, and in one single instance, altered the word to *caligraphy*. But, feeling some doubt, I consulted three or four different lexicons, all of which doubled the λ. And I have since met the word written *callig.* in a most carefully edited MS. of Porson."

Here is another instance of the same character:—

"I am very sorry that the question about *porticoes*, at p. 170, having been laid down on the table close to some letters brought by the Irish post, did not meet my eye for more than two hours after it must have been brought. In answer, I should myself be disposed to decide for *porticos* without the *e*."

At p. 112 of the "Confessions" he had written: "Any larger allowance, most reasonably she [his mother] urged, what was it but to 'make proclamation to my two younger brothers that rebellion bore a premium; and that to mutiny was the ready road to ease and comfort;'" and on a query being made whether the verb "to mutiny" here was not a mistake for a noun substantive, and whether the "to" should not be deleted, he replied thus, with ready instance:—"Yes; it *was* intended to use the verb; that is, according to common usage of treating an infinitive as a noun substantive, as, *e.g.*—

> 'For not *to have been dipt* in Lethe's stream
> Could save the son of Thetis from *to die*.'
>
> —*Spenser*

Immersion in Lethe, *i.e.*, could not save Achilles from *death*. But, on the whole, perhaps better to delete the *to*."

On its being pointed out to him that at p. 90 of the "Confessions" he wrote *the groom*, when that individual had not been mentioned before, and that the expression was not clear, he replied:—"This is a just remark; and I am greatly obliged to the author of it. The best way to remedy the fault, without making a necessity for too large a disturbance of the text, will be—1, to substitute for '*the groom*,' '*a groom of Mr. Lawson's;*' 2. (in order to gain space corresponding to this change), to delete in the line immediately following '*gloom and:*' it will then stand, '*to throw despondency.*' *A groom of* has numerically the same *letters* as *the groom* (viz., eight), only it has one more interspace. Again, '*Mr. Lawson's*' numerically has nine letters; '*gloom and*' has eight. The little difference, I presume, will not much matter."

The odd resources on which he would fall occasionally, to gain a little time for the writing of a note or addendum, is shadowed forth in this little note:—

8 P.M. *now striking.*

MY DEAR SIR,—The line of MS. on p. 320 arose in this way: I felt that an extract from Addison was required in strictness to support the reference to him; but in my hurry, not having the passage ready, I fancied that this *caveat* might lay an *ad interim* arrest on the press, so as to gain the time requisite, or to cause an inquiry. But now—as I presume the time to be gone—the citation (not above half a page) might be introduced quite as seasonably among the supplementary notices of the Preface.

De Quincey was very abstemious—a man of the simplest tastes—as I had ample opportunities of observing during the years that I was associated

with him. Often have I heard him descant upon the beneficial properties of little delicacies that friends had sent him—frequently things so utterly simple that most people would not have deemed them worthy of remark,—a pot of black-currant jam, or even a pea-flour *scone*, calling forth many words of grateful appreciation. As a stimulant, he preferred a particular preparation of brandy; and his maximum allowance of this during an evening on extraordinary occasions, when we would discuss at length, say, the *Coming* History of England, the Indian Mutiny, the Chinese War, or the latest notorious murder, was measured in a manner peculiar to himself—*two wine-glasses two-thirds full.*

His now much-reduced doses of laudanum he regularly took largely diluted in water. His reason for this was, that when taken as supplied by the chemist it caused a very annoying and even painful itching in the nostrils. He seldom used a spoon or measure, as from long habit he could, by holding up a wine-glass to the light, accurately measure out the required quantity. This glass was then filled to the extent of about two-thirds with water. It has been erroneously supposed by some that this mixture in the glass was quaffed as others did wine. So far from this being the case, I have seen the same glassful stand on the table during a long evening with only occasional sips being taken out of it. Even after his long indulgence in opium, no one knew better than Mr. de Quincey the danger of a sudden increase to his daily allowance. This was only to be done by degrees, and if by any mistake or inadvertence his daily allowance was suddenly increased, the effects were at

once felt. I may here recall an instance of this. On the occasion referred to, Mr. de Quincey had been complaining for some days, and in the evening, after partaking of his usual dose, went to bed, giving instructions that he wished to be called at a given hour in the morning. His attendant, on calling him at the hour named, and getting no reply, entered the room, and found him in a state of stupor, which caused some alarm. I was at once sent for, but in the meantime, from the simple appliances which had been used, he had so far recovered, that by the addition of a table spoonful of brandy he was soon in his usual state. He explained to me, that feeling exceedingly unwell and greatly pained during the night, rather than disturb his attendant, he got out of bed in the dark, and finding his phial containing the laudanum, applied it to his lips, thinking thereby to relieve his sufferings. He was afraid he had taken more than he intended, but an examination of the phial showed that after all he had not so far exceeded; the effect which the small additional dose had produced being probably increased by the enfeebled state in which he then happened to be.

Many a time, whilst living at Lasswade, has he reached my office, utterly wearied out and fit for nothing—for he would persist in his pedestrian exercises in very wet and trying weather; after taking one or two opium-pills, in a short time he would become "lively as a cricket," able not only to arrange the business he had come upon, but to indulge in sprightly conversation, which he would brighten up in quite a peculiar way with little jets of humour.

It has been noticed by others that, notwithstand-

ing his apparent fragility of frame, he was wiry, and able to undergo a good deal of physical fatigue. Indeed, he was a first-rate pedestrian, and kept himself well in exercise. He considered that fourteen miles a day was necessary for his health. When in Edinburgh, the quietude of the Meadows and Morningside made them his favourite resorts. I recall the account which he gave me of what befell him on one occasion in the course of his daily perambulations at Lasswade. In his own graphic words, delivered with an air of solemnity mingled with twinkling humour, the relation was to me as amusing as it was characteristic. Not far from his cottage he tracked out a space of ground on two highways, where comparatively few foot-passengers were to be met with. These were connected by a cross lane, and having, by some process of his own, measured off a distance of three and a half miles, this multiplied by four made up exactly his fourteen miles. All seemed admirably calculated for quiet reflection and exercise combined. It so happened that at different points on the two highways a number of men were employed in breaking "metal" for the roads; but as these were all engaged on the side opposite to the footpath, and the highways were a considerable breadth, no interruption, he thought, could arise from the operations in which these men were engaged. He accordingly began his perambulations, and all went well for a few days. These stone-breakers, from seeing him passing and repassing so frequently, and having ascertained who he was, thought it but respectful that they should, in their own fashion, pass the compliments of the day. These, with very

slight variations, consisted of, "It's a cold morning, sir;" "How are you this morning, sir?" "Are we going to have snow, sir?" "I hope you are well this morning, sir;" &c.; such questions being continued during the whole line of route. These inquiries, though monotonous, were kindly meant; and, of course, must be responded to in the same spirit. At first he began to call out his replies across the road, but as some of the men were, they said, rather hard of hearing, he found it difficult to make them understand. He was not a shepherd from the mountains, who was versant with all the approaching changes of the weather, and besides, these men who were always in the open air should know more about the matter than he did; and in answer to the inquiry after the state of his health, if he were to bawl across the road, "Pretty well, I thank you," that might not be correct, and he became quite puzzled what to do. He thought of purchasing a dozen or so of weather almanacks, and by giving one to each man, leave him to understand that it contained all he knew of the subject. But as his own health was even more variable than the weather, and as no Old Moore or Belfast man had, so far as he knew, published anything on *that* subject, he was forced to abandon all hope in this direction. As a last resource, he resolved on his first outset each morning to walk along the enemy's line, and thus get quit of all further inquiries during the day. On making a start in this way, each man, thinking he had crossed the road to enjoy a "crack," stopped work, and resting on the end of his hammer, began accordingly. One, an old soldier, recounted his campaigns; another

told him how much he suffered from rheumatism, &c.; so that by the time he reached the last of the file, he found that he was half an hour too late for dinner, and had lost half his day's exercise. In despair, he betook himself to his own garden, and continued his exercise along the gravel walks until he had made up his fourteen miles.

Even at seventy years of age, he was active and vigorous, and easily out-walked me, though I was a much younger man. I remember on one occasion, when visiting him at Lasswade, on a particularly hot day in midsummer, I proposed that he should accompany me to the house of an old friend, a paper-maker in the vicinity. To reach the paper-mill we had to descend one of those ravines on the Esk already alluded to. On returning from our visit, there was between us and Lasswade a steep hill, which De Quincey ascended like a squirrel. I found myself at the top quite exhausted, while he had all along kept up an unremitting monologue on the Beauties of Herder—that being the particular subject which he had then in hand. On my remarking on my own condition, he smiled, and at once set off on a disquisition on the evils of city life as opposed to the freedom of rural life, as affecting physical condition.

Mr. de Quincey had a great dislike to all formalities. Visitors, many of them from long distances, were frequent at his house. To all he was courteous, hospitable, and communicative; but invitations to dinner, particularly where strangers were expected, caused him, as he said, unheard-of misery. I have sometimes fancied

that some of his occasional migrations to lodgings in Edinburgh may have been due to some threatened dining-out calamity. No one, perhaps, knew him better than his intimate friend, the late Professor Wilson. Meeting the Professor one day, nearly his first words to me were, "Well, how is friend De Quincey?" I replied that when I saw him yesterday he was rather complaining, and that I was then on my way to visit him. "Ah!" said the Professor, "I hope it is only caused by one of those small matters about which he is so frequently worrying himself, such as the loss of a manuscript or some other trifle." At that moment an open carriage happened to pass, the occupant of which saluted the Professor, who, after returning the salutation, continued: "There," said he, "goes one who cares nothing for trifles; he makes no secret of being due thousands, and yet goes lolling in a carriage about the streets as we see him; whereas if De Quincey were due a five-pound note he would be one of the most miserable men in existence, and would never be seen in public. Say to him when you call that I would be pleased if he would come and dine with me to-morrow at the usual hour. You know the difficulty of dragging him out to dinner. Say that we are to have no strangers, and that I will see to a dish of hare-soup *à la* De Quincey being on the table."

I could have added many anecdotes to these; what I have said may help to bring some of De Quincey's characteristics nearer to the reader. He was most ingenuous, most loveable,—a delightful friend and companion, if you made the allowances which were in fact demanded of you, before venturing into his

society. I look back upon it as one of the pleasures and privileges of my life, that for so many years I should have been on such a footing of friendship with one who was so gifted, ingenuous, and noble.

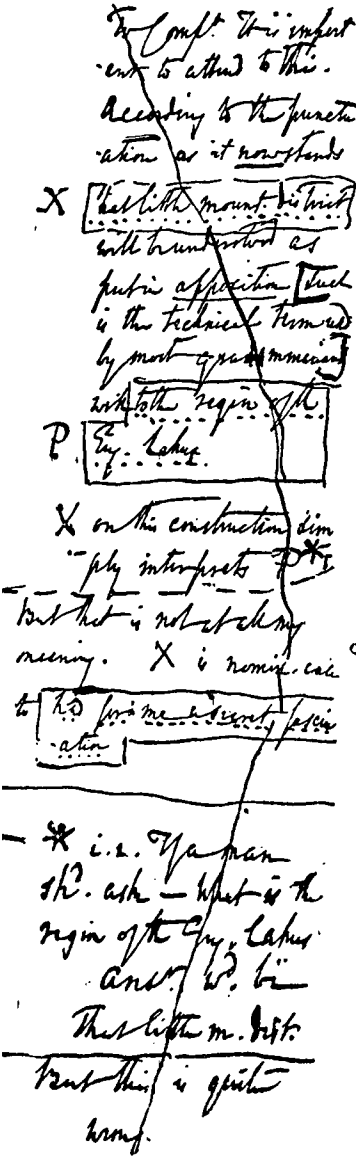
CHAPTER XVII.

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS.

ONCE engaged in the work of collecting and revising his various articles scattered here and there for upwards of a quarter of a century, De Quincey had little reserve-strength for original production. He dropped most of his old relationships. But now and then he threw off a most characteristic article for "Hogg's Instructor," or, later, for "Titan;" making us wonder at the versatility and power he still possessed. As little did he now as in his earlier years confine himself to one groove. We have learned articles on grave historical questions,—such as the guilt of Anne Boleyn, *àpropos* of Mr. Froude's earlier volumes; acute discussions of the etymology wrapped up in local names, especially some of those of Westmoreland; articles on distant countries and their development, particularly on California and on China, in view of the war which was then progressing between England and it; on the opium trade and its influences, a matter on which he was well qualified to speak; "Hurried Notices of the Indian Mutiny"—a subject which for a time possessed

his mind; and bright little *jeux d'esprit*, glimmering with wealth of fancy, humour, and knowledge.

In the practical work of the press, it is very touching to come on testimonies innumerable in the MS. notes and proof-sheets committed to our use, that his very regard for others, his dislike to seem peremptory, his delicate desire to show how fully he respected the hints or the feelings of others, often led him into difficulties and gave rise to misapprehensions and mistakes. Added to this, was his habit of trusting to verbal messages in his general dislike of note-writing, and his occasional complete repulsion from it. All was intensified by his inveterate incapacity to relieve himself of the *débris* of former undertakings; so that leaves and slips and magazines and books were constantly going amissing. Amidst all, it is beautiful to see how the old man blames himself alone, and shows nothing of a querulous or embittered or repining temper. One instance out of many of the manner in which he ran the risk of obscuring very plain and simple directions, by appending minute explanations on the margin of his proofs, we give in fac-simile. The printers in the following sentence of the "Confessions" had omitted to put a full point at the word "Lakes," and, instead, after a comma, had *run on* with a small "t" at the word "that;" giving of course a wholly different sense from that which he intended:—"My plan originally had been to travel northwards, viz., to the region of the English Lakes. That little mountainous district—lying stretched like a pavilion between four well-known points, viz., the small towns of Ulverstone and Penrith as its two poles—south and north; between



Kendal again on the east and Egremont on the west, measuring on the one diameter about forty miles, and on the other perhaps thirty-five—had for me a secret fascination, subtle, sweet, fantastic, and even from my seventh or eighth year, spiritually strong." But De Quincey did not, as most other experienced authors would have done (the wisest course, too), content himself with the plain correction of it, he appends a long and minute explanation. And not only this; but he has over and over again to add an "N.B.," saying that the printer will understand that a line drawn through such casual explanations indicates only that these spider-like memoranda are quite unconnected with the text, and not to be printed.

Though he regarded his rooms in Lothian Street as his workshop proper, he had his times for going out to Lasswade, where he was then pretty sure to be found. Appointments were made for him to meet there any person whom he desired to entertain. We find, for example, notices of visits from one with whom reminiscences of old days could be exchanged, as in the close of this short note:—

MY DEAR SIR,—My non-performances after circumstantial notice have been so many, that I can hardly hope for any credit, when I tell you that on Monday next [which is *March* 3, I think] I shall be in Lothian Street with the MS. all ready for the press. My endless failures in keeping the day fixed by myself were really unavoidable under the nervous sufferings of the time. But now, and for a fortnight back, my health is greatly improved under a great change of regimen: and were it not that Professor Lushington comes over to-morrow for a visit of two days, I should have come over to-day.—Ever yours,

T. DE Q.

Even Mr. Carlyle is not above making permanent

record of "taxes and botherations;" and we can easily believe that De Quincey had sometimes uncomfortable as well as pleasant ties to Lasswade in these years of labour on the "Collected Works." The following notes attest this:—

MY DEAR SIR,—For the last two days I have been besieged by letters from Lasswade, relating to irregularities in the settlement of taxes during the last ten months, when my daughter has been in Ireland, and also under a disputed point as to the lease of our house—whether in law to me, or to one of my daughters—some annoyance I had on Thursday and Friday. But this morning's post brings me a letter which makes it necessary for me to await the appearance of my daughter Emily by an early hour, so as to concert with her (who only can furnish the explanations) the settlement of this business.

It is vexatious to stumble at starting. But, in spite of this interruption, I can certainly guarantee the *entire* article of 150 pages by 9 A.M. on Monday.—Yours truly, T. DE Q.

MY DEAR SIR,—The affair at Lasswade is more embarrassed than ever. The several versions of facts are all contradictory, and I am now waiting for, I hope, a final explanation from Ireland.

My agitation at the prospect of utter ruin past all repair, has prevented me from paying any serious attention to the various proofs lying here. But I will endeavour this morning to make the requisite alterations. But I must mention to you that the press has never sent me (according to the usual practice) the original copies of the "Goethe." Now, why should I need this less than all the others which have been invariably sent? The truth is, I have a twofold want of it—first, for the ordinary purpose of consulting in those places where I distrust the accuracy of the compositor; secondly, for the purpose of obliterating my own pencil marks, which I would not for all the world have on the margins.

Surely the reason for not sending this is not to spare me the mortification of seeing the book cut into fragments. So long as there was a chance of my saving the volume by my representations, I did all that I could. But now that the volume is

destroyed as one of a series, I have no wish or right to interfere further. You, doubtless, had consciously the right to destroy it, because you it was that, doubtless, undertook the responsibility of destroying it.—Yours truly, T. DE Q.

MY DEAR SIR,—Exactly at this moment (not far, I suppose, from noon-day), I find myself first of all able to look with any use or benefit at the proofs of Goethe; and as all must be revised *concurrently as a whole*, it would be quite impossible to review and to regulate the whole series of proofs within a narrower space than that of to-day and to-morrow. Early on Monday morning, therefore, the messenger will find them all ready. There is a *personal* case of deep importance to myself depending upon it. But under *any* circumstances how could the press take upon itself to intercept my sole opportunity of dealing with a case which the lapse of twenty-five years has greatly effected?—Yours truly, T. DE Q.

The following shows the value he attached to fair and appreciative criticism. Mr. Hogg had sent him copies of the "Athenæum" and "Scotsman" with notices of the earlier volumes of the series, and he thus replies:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I am greatly obliged to you for your yesterday's communication of "The Scotsman" and "The Athenæum." I should imagine that, amongst *weekly* journals, these two were exactly the most extensively influential—the first in Edinburgh, or perhaps in Scotland—the other throughout the whole island. And the *weekly* journals, coming so early in the career of a book, and from their low price being so extensively diffused, I should suppose must tell for half the battle. Certainly there is no other journal whose favourable verdict I should so highly have valued and wished for. I have kept "The Athenæum," whose judgment is more than kind, for this day. Meantime will you inform Miss Stark * where is the regular place of sale

* [Miss Stark, the sister of his landlady in Lothian Street, was most frequently trusted with his messages, as other letters will testify.—ED.]

for "The Athenæum." After these two decisive and energetic reports, I am comparatively careless as to any unfriendly ones in narrower circles that may follow.—Ever yours, T. DE Q.

But even critical journals did not always escape the doom that visited bits of his own *copy* and proof-sheets. They were mislaid before they were read, and were, for the time being, irrecoverable. Books which he borrowed for the purpose of reference got overlaid, and had sometimes to be returned, in answer to the urgencies of librarians, without his ends having been accomplished, as in this case:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I return you Bentley's "Milton" and "Tait" for 1851, according to your desire, and beg you to excuse the trouble I have caused you. I was naturally anxious before returning them to accomplish the object of borrowing them. But this having unfortunately been found impossible, perhaps you can at some future time borrow them again. Else I shall lose the whole benefit of my ample references to Bentley's "Paradise Lost." "The Economist," which you sent yesterday, was thoroughly and wilfully malicious. "The Lyceum" was more laudatory than the case deserved; and laudatory in a double way—*virtually* in the space assigned, and *formally* in words. But also, which I most prized, was the closing reference to a criticism of mine, *not recent*, in the article on Mdlle. Schurmann. I am greatly obliged to you for the two journals, which last night I returned.

Though on more than one occasion he has to mourn that "no waste of time is more useless or irreparable than what is spent upon explanatory letters; yet, having no intelligent messenger, What resource," he asks, "is left?" The following will show how earnestly he laboured to get to a thorough understanding, which, however, was hardly to the end attained:—

I am much afraid that, in consequence of the very imper-

fect means for communicating with the press which I now possess, or ever *have* possessed (being at all times reduced to the single resource of WRITING)—which, to evade misinterpretation and constant ambiguity, requires a redundancy of words—and, after all that is done on *my* part, requires in addition a *reader* that is not only singularly attentive, but also that has a surplus stock of *leisure time*. PREMISING all this, I am and *have* been, at all stages of this nominal reprint (but virtually *rifacimento*) of the "Confessions," in terror of mutual misunderstandings; consequently of each party unintentionally thwarting or embarrassing the other by movements at *cross purposes*.

Now, for instance, at the very stage which this morning (Thursday, September 18) we have reached, it seems to me that, from repeated calls on me to fix a time for the messenger's returning (calls reiterated through the last eight or ten days), the press do not apprehend my present position, and my wish as founded upon that position. As often as the messenger has asked, *When was he to call again?* I have replied, Call for what? The press, if at all I comprehend the state of things, has in hand seventy pages or nearly of "copy." Will not this serve to proceed with? At one time this demur arose—viz., that in order to proceed, the types must be liberated. Well, this I understand; and now, so far as *I* am concerned, the types *are* liberated, are they not? The few trifling corrections sent this morning, once adopted, all is free, I suppose, up to the word LONDON, end of the Cambrian section. Why then, after taking down the types so far, cannot the press move on? However, to leave no opening for cross-purposes founded on imperfect explanations, let me close thus :—

Call the whole of the text up to London, A B C.

— — — — — text yet to come, X Y Z.

This being settled, then I wish to explain that between A B C and X Y Z there is (*not yet sent*) a link of connection. How long? Originally not more than one sentence. But of late, *i.e.*, whilst all this recent printing has been going on, this intervening *nexus* has swollen from a sentence to a page, or by'r lady, possibly two pages. Now question arises—Does that make any difference? To me the difference is great: it often happens that at one moment I cannot write satisfactorily what at another I can. If possible, therefore, if no reason unknown against me, I would desire to profit by the time (or part of the

time) spent by the press on X Y Z. Have I made myself understood? Could not the press go ahead, though with a rear wanting the last touch?

This is another letter pressing somewhat helplessly in the same direction:—

MY DEAR SIR,—You do not apprehend my meaning? One single illustration, or instance, will clear up the case. What I wish is, to have a list of the articles already received by the press. Why? Simply that I may thus know what articles they have NOT received.

For instance: I count upon the paper entitled "Coleridge and Opium Eating" as upon one of the most effective articles; but I am utterly in the dark as to where this paper is—whether *chez moi?* or *chez la presse?* (I speak French, simply as being the briefest way of conveying my doubt.)

Now mark the difference to me according to the answer:

1. On the assumption that the paper is in *my* possession, then of course I will seek till I find it; and there will be no labour thrown away. But,

2. On the counter assumption that the paper is all the while in possession of the press, the difference to me would be this—that I should be searching for perhaps half a day; and as it is manifestly not on my table, I should proceed on the postulate that it must have been transposed to the floor. Consequently the work would all be unavoidably a process of stooping and all labour lost, from which I should hardly recover for a fortnight. This explains to you my earnestness in the matter.

Exactly the same doubt applies (and therefore exactly the same dilemma or alternative of *stoop*, or *stoop not*) to the paper on *Greece*, and to some others.

The next is more cheerful:—

I have had two letters since Monday, which for different reasons I wish to show you. But at this moment I do not see them. One is from Mr. Sylvanus Urban, whom I recall as amongst the very *incunabula* of my literary notices. The other is from the Westminster Reviewer of Froude, a kind and really interesting letter from the just views (just in *my* eyes) which he takes of English history in that section.

The following suggests a very odd error into which De Quincey somehow fell—no doubt vaguely confusing Mr. Anthony Froude with Hurrell Froude—and under which he laboured at the time he wrote his ingenious notice of Mr. Froude's first two volumes in "Titan," a notice which that historian no doubt read with gratified feelings—notwithstanding that on one or two points the writer was not wholly at one with him:—

MY DEAR SIR,—1. Mr. Froude's death I do not infer from the expression *late* Fellow; for *late* in that position (both in Oxford and Cambridge) is equal to the French *ci-devant*, not equal to the French *feu*. But on other grounds I am pretty sure that he has been long dead.

2. The title, I fear, of Guilt of Anne Boleyn would promise too much. And the real object which I had by me all along was—the volcanic character of Henry VIII.'s reign. To me it appears that some title simply announcing a glance at this stormy period would be best.

Sometimes complications and delays arose from his partiality for footnotes. This is a frank confession in reference to Professor Wilson:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I have entangled myself in a far longer note than I had intended; but I will extricate myself and end in half an hour. Meantime, being upon the subject of Professor Wilson, it will be received with indulgence. I do not thoroughly understand what part I have not returned; but whilst I am searching for it, that the press may have something to go on with, I send the accompanying.

This "accompanying" was as likely as not to yield no more help to the press than if it had come from a man who had never before been in contact with the practical exigencies of a printing-office. But helpless as he was to prevent such misunder-

standings and complications, he was most considerate for those inconvenienced by them. The following notes will show this:—

My dear Sir,—I am exceedingly sorry for the trouble I cause; and moreover I become painfully conscious that the article may not prove such as to justify being stayed for. But if it is stayed for, the rest will certainly be ready by 10 A.M. to-morrow. . . . Being so overmastered as I find myself by nervousness, perhaps it will be better that I send myself to the press—to save loss of time to the press runner. I am at present greatly dependent on Tea; and as soon as I have had *that*, I hope to be a new creature.

It disturbs me to find that I have been constantly working at the wrong part. My notion was—an erroneous notion it seems—that, when at any point I could not satisfy myself in the expression of a thought, then it was open to me to go forward, leaving a chasm to be filled up afterwards when it became necessary to make up the text into sheets.

A strong conviction of distracting the printers instead of aiding them by his lengthened notes sometimes forces itself upon him; and always his one recourse is to the note-writing, which he so dislikes:—

My dear Sir,—It kills me to write notes. But this I scratch out as containing the upshot. I am sunk in feebleness and exhaustion. Yet still, and notwithstanding, if you leave me three clear days—then, on Monday morning, the 6th of June, I will have prepared such an appendix of notes, as will in bulk and otherwise fill the vacant space. It seems as if to the very last my destiny were to cause delays.

But this quickly follows, the appendix of notes not yet forthcoming:—

My dear Sir,—I had a far worse attack last night after parting with you than on Sunday; but in one thing better—no delirium. After fighting all night till nine this morning with

the torments of this sudden attack, I fell asleep, from which sleep, being awakened by the press messenger, I said, Come at three. But it is now three, and I have not been able to rise.

Perhaps it will be better for *me* to send to the press. Or, if the press at a hazard would send down at six, I will endeavour to be ready.—Ever yours, T. DE Q.

His exceeding desire to oblige and to aid those who were on a friendly footing with him is well brought out by the efforts he made to write articles for the first numbers of "Titan." He had just had a somewhat serious prostration; and, in addition to his nervousness, was threatened with a failure of eyesight, and had occasional visits of lumbago. A few letters will bring out his goodwill, which prompted extreme efforts in a low condition of health:—

MY DEAR SIR,—For some weeks my eyes had given me so much pain, and consequently so much anxiety about the result, that at last I wrote to my daughter Emily—begging her to return to Lasswade. This she did last week. But now (through intermission perhaps of candle-light reading) my eyes are again better. What I wish therefore to do, before returning to Lasswade, is to make up one, or if possible two, volumes; the sixth and seventh.

I was attempting to write a short paper of three pages—"Anticipations of the Coming War in China;" but I fear that for the coming number of "Titan" any contribution is now too late. I am also writing a paper on "Opium." In one fortnight or three weeks I hope to have left the new volumes in such a state of preparation, that a very few trips of your press runners will suffice to wind them up.—Yours very truly,

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

MY DEAR SIR,—From your not sending this morning, I begin to fear that I am too late: which will give me pain—having suddenly recollected (which until Sunday I had entirely forgotten), that the remodelling of "Titan" commences next

month. This, indeed, I had often repeated to myself, with the idea that next month would be the call for something novel; forgetting, unfortunately, that the 1*st* of next month was the time.

You, I imagine, will be likely to make one natural mistake—viz., that this paper being about China, is simply the old story a little recast. Not so. When you have the whole, you will see that it has nothing in common with the old article.—Yours ever, T. DE Q.

This little note accompanied the article when sent:—

I am far from being satisfied myself with the first part of China; therefore cancel it altogether without mercy, if you feel disposed to do so. I am perfectly in earnest. In the second part I shall do better.

And the following came along with the proof when returned:—

"I am sure you will do me the justice to believe that I have done my best. But the result, I fear, is bad, and this from various causes. It is also *dreadfully too long*. It is therefore with perfect sincerity that I propose as follows:—That the whole should be cancelled; and I will most cheerfully undertake to write such another paper as will reimburse the loss which in that case you will have sustained by the costs of the press. Every man is liable to some failures, and this, I fear, is one of mine; but a most unwilling one, and in part owing to *lumbago*, which at times prevents my rising from my chair."

Shortly after, he began the article on the opium trade; but the difficulties under which it was accomplished are best indicated in the note we next print:—

MY DEAR SIR,—Through the whole of last night I sat up, and have the whole in a rough state. But very frankly I confess to you—that from the extreme difficulty and delicacy which I found in treating the subject of opium as it affects our Chinese relations—unless you can be kind enough to allow me this coming afternoon, I do not see any way of winding up the whole properly. Want of sleep, and the laudanum which I was obliged to take, have reduced me really to a state of perfect confusion.—T. DE Q.

The labour on "The Confessions" proved particularly trying. Many letters before us bear this out. We select the following:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I am in a great perplexity. I have been for some days engaged *chiefly* upon the closing passages of the "Confessions," which it is that tax my powers of every kind most. But I have endeavoured also to keep up with the current demands of the press; as part of which keeping up I send the two pages 16 and 17. But I am quite at a loss about what it is that the press wants *most*—wants *immediately*. —Ever yours, T. DE Q.

De Quincey himself, in the Preface to the edition in the "Collected Works," makes us acquainted with the process through which the whole work was passed. It was filled up, detailed by means of secondary incident, and the close made far more effective by the introduction of several additional dreams. We must give a short extract from this Preface, as being the best means of indicating the great changes effected on the "Confessions" in their final form:

"By accident, a considerable part of the Confessions (all, in short, except the Dreams) had originally been written hastily; and, from various causes, had never received any strict revision, or,

virtually, so much as an ordinary verbal correction. But a great deal more was wanted than this. The main narrative should naturally have moved through a succession of secondary incidents; and with leisure for recalling these, it might have been greatly inspirited. Wanting all opportunity for such advantages, this narrative had been needlessly impoverished. And thus it had happened, that not so properly correction and retrenchment were called for, as integration of what had been left imperfect, or amplification of what, from the first, had been insufficiently expounded. . . . . Meantime, this improvement has been won at the price of labour and suffering, that, if they could be truly stated, would seem incredible. A nervous malady of a very peculiar character, which has attacked me intermittingly for the last eleven years, came on in May last, almost concurrently with the commencement of this revision; and so obstinately has this malady pursued its noiseless, and what I may call subterraneous, siege, since none of the symptoms are externally manifested, that, although pretty nearly dedicating myself to this one solitary labour, and not intermitting or relaxing it for a single day, I have yet spent, within a very few days, six calendar months upon the recast of this one small volume."

And after apologising for such blunders as may have escaped notice, and after confessing a fear that "sometimes a heavy or too intricate arrangement of sentences may have defeated the tendency of what, under its natural presentation, would have been affecting; or that by unseasonable levity at other

times, I may have repelled the sympathy of my readers"—he goes on to say:—

"I have thus made the reader acquainted with one out of two cross currents that tended to thwart my efforts for improving this little work. There was, meantime, another less open to remedy from my own uttermost efforts. All along I had relied upon a crowning grace, which I had reserved for the final pages of this volume, in a succession of some twenty or twenty-five dreams and noon-day visions, which had arisen under the latter stages of opium-influence. These have disappeared: some under circumstances which allow me a reasonable hope of recovering them; some unaccountably, and some dishonourably. Five or six, I believe, were burned in a sudden conflagration which arose from a spark of a candle falling unobserved amongst a very large pile of papers in a bedroom, when I was alone and reading. Falling not *on*, but *amongst* and *within* the papers, the fire would soon have been ahead of conflict; and, by communicating with the slight woodwork and draperies of a bed, it would have immediately enveloped the laths of the ceiling overhead, and thus the house, far from fire-engines, would have been burned down in half an hour. My attention was first drawn by a sudden light upon my book; and the whole difference between a total destruction of the premises and a trivial loss (from books charred) of five guineas was due to a large Spanish cloak. This thrown over, and then drawn down tightly by the aid of one sole person, somewhat agitated, but retaining her presence of mind, effectually extinguished the fire. Amongst the papers burned partially, but not so

burned as to be absolutely irretrievable, was the 'Daughter of Lebanon;' and this I have printed, and have intentionally placed it at the end, as appropriately closing a record in which the case of poor Ann, the Outcast, formed not only the most memorable and the most suggestively pathetic incident, but also *that* which, more than any other, coloured—or (more truly, I should say) shaped, moulded, and remoulded, composed and decomposed—the great body of opium dreams. The search after the lost features of Ann, which I spoke of as pursued in the streets of London, was in a more proper sense pursued through many a year in dreams. The general idea of a search and a chase reproduced itself in many shapes. The person, the rank, the age, the scenical position, all varied themselves for ever; but the same leading traits more or less faintly remained of a lost Pariah woman, and of some shadowy malice which withdrew her from restoration and from hope. Such is the explanation which I offer why that particular addition which some of my friends had been authorised to look for, has not in the main been given, nor for the present *could* be given; and, secondly, why that part which *is* given has been placed in the conspicuous situation (as a closing passage) which it now occupies.

"*November* 1856."

In midst of difficulties incident to the work itself, came others incident to domestic arrangements—such sweeping and cleaning as students have from been prone to regard as gratuitous. To De the intimations of such intended visitatio[illegible] came

a voice of terror. It is in a tone of mingled pathos and resignation that he makes his publisher cognisant of his misfortunes :—

My dear Sir,—I am concerned to tell you—which until last night I did not know—that a process of whitewashing or otherwise cleaning ceilings, &c., which has been going on since Monday morning in other parts of the house, extends itself next to my room; and it seems that agreeably to a contract with the landlord, this must be done in the course of the same operation; *i.e.*, it cannot be postponed. This will impose on me a most difficult process of shifting papers, whose connection, now marked only by local position, cannot be lost without confusion, and will, I fear, occupy me till night.—Ever truly.

My dear Sir,—There is a great confusion this day in Mrs. Wilson's lodgings, from the repairing, sweeping, painting, &c. And moreover the landlady's sister, who it is that chiefly communicates with strangers at the door, is deaf. . . . At the moment [I believe between 7 and 8 A.M.] of appointing 12 as the hour for the return of your messenger, I was quite unaware that by a mistake natural in the confusion of yesterday's sudden clearance, most of the papers belonging to the Confessions had been placed within a set of drawers against which is now reared the whitewasher's scaffolding. This will be withdrawn, I understand, so far as to give me access about 5 P.M. But that will be too late for me to have them in a state for the press till to-morrow morning. I am exhausted by the twenty-four hours' labour of the separation and *sorting* of such innumerable papers. The sorting could not be evaded, under the necessity of removing them at all; else I should have been *lost* irrecoverably in the resulting confusion. I am just at the last point of my *innovations* in the Confessions. After those I fall back into the old current, so that pretty nearly a mere reprinting will be all. Except, however, as to the final *Suspiria*.

[redacted]s needless to say that, as time went on, he improve in matters of order and regularity. Sometimes indeed, he was thrown into despair. He

is now at work on the sixth volume. Dr. Parr would almost seem to have had his revenge for some severe things De Quincey had said of him:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I am suddenly thrown into despair. All the Parr proofs (on the belief that they were entirely used up) would have been by this time burned, but for the accident that some arrear of queries arose upon them. Hence, *not* burned; but so chaotically confounded with all other papers, that (if the press finds them indispensable) I must spend this night in searching for them. I have already found two packets, but discontinuous. Miss Starke will learn what is the exact amount of aid that *I* separately can give in this awkward dilemma.

MY DEAR SIR,—The act of *stooping* has for many years caused me so much illness, that in this search—all applied to papers lying on the floor, entangled with innumerable newspapers—I have repeatedly been forced to pause.

I have found most parts of the Shelley article, but no more of the Parr, for which, however, I am still searching.

(1) Looking *back*, and (2) looking *forward*, I will state my own view.

1. Having had no reason whatever for keeping the used pages, I fear that the seventeen or eighteen missing may have been burned in suddenly lighting candles; and I am more surprised at finding so many than at missing so few.

2. I suggest that, if you think the notes of any importance, the press should let me have the American copy of the notes, together with a copy of the text. In fifteen or twenty minutes I would mark the place of reference for the whole.

The next note evidently has to do with the eighth and ninth volumes, and presents alternative proposals for the close of the eighth, and the opening of the ninth —the necessity for which had arisen from some [redacted] of the article on "Pope" having gone amissi[redacted]

MY DEAR SIR,—This occurs to me—

1. If the press could give me an idea of whereabouts the

chasm lies, I might, in fifteen minutes, supply an equivalent passage; unless only in the case that the missing part should happen to contain verbal criticisms on verses.

2. But in the alternative case that the press could *not* give me any account of the substance—might not this *Wellesley* paper be laid aside in reserve for the latter end of the volume. The fact is, that I was otherwise going to have asked you if the paper on Schlosser, being much better than I had imagined, and specially effective in its *closing* section, could not without much trouble stand first in the volume.

He experiences perpetual interruptions from things going amissing, necessitating search. His energies seem to be wasted in searching. Letter after letter is a mere apology for delay on that ground. Here is one little glimpse of his trials:—

My dear Sir,—It is useless to trouble you with the *ins* and *outs* of the process—the result is, that, working through most parts of the night, I have not yet come to the missing copy. I had fancied that when the press sent for the notes, this implied that the whole of the text was received. But as it turns out that I was mistaken, I am going on with the search yet,—being walled in by superfluous furniture, in so narrow an area (not larger than a post-chaise, as regards the free space), I write with difficulty, and the *stooping* kills me. I greatly fear that the entire day will be spent in the search. Could not the press, in the interim, proceed with the paper on "Oracles," since the filling up of the chasm would be ensured on Monday?

But sometimes he *can* exult over a lucky accident, when Chance kindly does the shortening for him, as in case of this article on "Oracles":—

[redacted]ad a particular wish to *shorten* this article on "Oracles." [redacted]ently the accident could not have fallen better than [redacted]*has* fallen. The rest goes on from page 257 to page [redacted]ue enough of it. I send the next twelve pages cor[redacted]ected. Now if this is set up, I shall find it easy to connect

this part and the coming. All of us will escape about a dozen pages of yawning ; and you, separately, will escape the vexatiousness of writing letters for the purpose you kindly suggest of borrowing the journal where originally it appeared.

His excessive fastidiousness as to phrase pursues him; sometimes finds him out too late for the printer's comfort; and we often find him thus writing on returning proofs :—

"These four slips, by the way, would have been *virgin* slips but for the accident that suddenly I discovered myself to have described Grassini's voice twice at least, if not thrice in the very same words, as a contralto, and thus fell under the necessity of troubling the press with a darning."

And scarcely has he recovered from one domestic avalanche of whitewashers, painters, and so on, when another is upon him of quite a different sort. People who can pay more liberally than he can take the best suite of rooms over his head :—

My dear Sir,—I am obliged to tell you, with a certainty of causing vexation and annoyance both to you and myself, that the particular set of rooms in which you saw me last night, within half an hour of your departure I had a notice from Mrs. Wilson, would on this Tuesday morning be required for a Mr M'A——, resident for the moment near Bellingham, in Northumberland. He had, I know, been in treaty for the rooms but his decision had been suspended, and then made suddenly The result to me was, that, in order to remove papers, & without disturbing arrangements (cryptical, but intelligible myself) under my sofa, bed, and in other places, I was ob to rise before 2 A.M., and without fire—a want which k —to make straight the paths of Mr. M'A——. With extra exertion, I have but just accomplished my trans the new set to the old one. And literally *not one* l been able to contribute towards the liberation of *Now* precisely [viz., near one o'clock] I am starting, st.

fact, exactly as I stood last night when we parted. This explained, no use in losing more time by letter-writing. I will move with my uttermost speed.

Amidst all this, his consideration for others is constant, careful, descending to the minutest matters. The next few letters will abundantly show this :—

My dear Sir,—Miss Stark having been very unwell for the last two or three days, and very weak in consequence, I feel unwilling to burthen her with *both* books on a hot day. I have therefore sent what struck me as the most urgent, viz. (the Advocates' Library), Bentley's "Milton." Pray pardon the trouble I cause you. In some way I will contrive to send over the other book.—Ever yours.

The following note was one which gave rise to a misunderstanding affecting a message-boy :—

My dear Sir,—If (as the boy thinks) nothing will be used till Monday morning, would it not be better that we authors should have the advantage from this delay? I have been next to distraction all day long, having been up and writing *all* night. I have just set fire to my hair. No pen will write more legibly.

His concern lest this printer's boy should incur displeasure on his account leads him—though he dislikes note-writing beyond most men—to indite the following :—

My dear Sir,—From the pure accident of my first-written note to you on Saturday night having been so entirely illegible that I was obliged to write it over again, I thus had and have [illegible] of that note; which, after sleeping through Saturday found, and was shocked to find what nonsense it con- This was owing to the absolute distraction caused by g sat up through Friday night. Want of sleep and nbined rendered me partially delirious. But all this e little, by comparison with an unintentional injury have done to the boy who came for the *copy*. I

mentioned to you what he had said about the MS. not being wanted till Monday morning, and it might read as though he had *volunteered* this explanation. But he said nothing at all until questioned by Miss Stark,—she and myself both thinking it unlikely that any more printing would go on so late at night. I should be exceedingly sorry if through my own indiscretion or carelessness he had incurred your displeasure. As an extra chance for obtaining a rest that had become urgently wanted, I it was that committed any oversight that may have occurred: the boy was quite unimplicated in any part of the case, being, in fact, quite passive.

In 1858, as in 1853, his relations with the press were encumbered with many misunderstandings; but that he was still as ready to take the blame to himself and grieve over it, is seen from the following:—

MY DEAR SIR,—It is most unfortunate, nor am I able to guess the cause, that I, who am rendered seriously unhappy whenever I find or suppose myself to have caused any loss of time to a compositor, whose time is generally his main estate, am yet constantly doing so—unintentionally, and in most cases unconsciously. This morning, had I known what was the slip or column brought by Roderick,* I could have *instantly* returned it, for, in fact, I corrected it all yesterday [I think by 3 P.M., or thereabouts]; and if any messenger had called, or if I could have commanded the services of Miss Stark, it would undoubtedly have been at the press a full twenty-four hours before this date.

In monetary matters, his excessive concern for others, and his fear of benefitting at their expense, are as distinctly characteristic. The three notes which follow bring this out; and few would expect in one who had had for so long a time to traffic with

* Roderick was the boy who is referred to in the l... and usually entrusted with the messages from th... being a favourite with De Quincey.—ED.

world, and had made experience of its hardness and selfishness, such a generous proposal as closes the third letter :—

MY DEAR SIR,—I am astonished at your enclosure—a thing wholly unexpected by me. What has interrupted my intercourse with the press, is not solely illness, but something which would be better explained in private conversation, and confidentially. I will make an effort to come over to-morrow. But, being weak, and suffering from my late attack, I do not feel *absolutely* sure of accomplishing so much.

MY DEAR SIR,—I found no difficulty in understanding the three documents sent to me yesterday afternoon. One states the history (as to cost, sale, &c.) of each several volume from I. to V. A *second* states the succession and chronology of my drafts upon you. A *third* contains my acknowledgment of the sums received.

So far all is so clear, that even an *ignoramus* like myself easily travels through its labyrinths. But one great perplexity occupied me for an hour or more. I am made to give a discharge for the sum of £258, 19s. 7d.———But, on the other hand the series of payments makes it manifest that I have received the sum of £285, 5s. 7d. This puzzled me greatly : but at length I came to a solution of the difficulty thus :—

285 has evidently furnished an inverted reading of 258. The 285 simply needs rearrangement ; and the 19s. 7d. is an erroneous transfer from a neighbouring section of the account. The sum of £285, 5s. 7d. evidently leaves the exact balance stated if £32 were subtracted from £317, 5s. 7d.

I had already signed the discharge before I became sensible of the error. So I send it to you, that you may doctor it *secundum artem*.

Now comes another point on which to consult you. A joyful spectacle it was to me—that amiable balance of £32. But in the first place this demur disturbs me : *that balance existed on June* 8th : elsewhere it is said on June 30th : elsewhere on July 1st. All those varieties I presume mean the same thing. But in July and August I have drawn more than once. Questions arising are these two—

1. How much?

2. On the remainder (be it what it may) have I a right to draw?

Saturday, April 23, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am uneasy at receiving no communication about the thirteenth volume; fearing that this halt must be owing to some misconception such *as I cannot even conjecture.*

At present, however, I do not write with any reference to that subject:—what I have for some time back been wishing to speak about, is the position in which your payments are just now waiting your decision upon my proposal in this note. . . .

It seems to me that some of the many conceivable changes in the commercial world,—such as houses, the best established, are liable to,—may possibly have occurred since January 23, 1858, bringing along with it some corresponding call for altering the *dates* of payments, or their *amounts.* For instance, with regard to this particular payment, it might be a convenience to substitute one for £50 instead of £100; or to alter the date.

This, you perceive, relates to the mere *transfer* of payments —making them fall at a later period than according to their present tenor; but, secondly, if further experience has led you to think or to know that the total sum offered by you was too much, be assured that I will cheerfully agree to any alteration which you may propose.—Ever yours most truly,

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

This is his report on a little article in "Titan" to which his attention had been called:—

MACARONIC LITERATURE.

This seems to me a capital paper, sufficiently comprehensive as to the illustrations, and everywhere admirably expressed in all that concerns the history and the legislation of literature under this section. Pity but we had all the subdivisions of literature as well treated.—At the moment of taking leave of it I observe 2 errata.

On p. penult. (viz., p. 417) left hd. col., in the Sapphics—1st stanza—

Ille with ease can facere alba nigra,
Rendere et lucem piceas tenebras :
Ille can : rursus piceas tenebras
Rendere lucem.

The colon after *Ille can* should to all appearance be deleted.

On the last supplementary rag to p. 418—

Puff duppos omnes humbuggos

should apparently be—

Puff dupos omnes, humbuggos—
All dupes of Puffs, all humbugs, &c.

His attention to minute details of a certain kind, which went along with all that tendency to confusion in other respects, was very noticeable ; and in nothing more than in the exceeding care he took to find titles really expressing the character of the various volumes.

My dear Sir,—Whether the fault is in some growing defect of my *eyes*, or in the badness of such *lights* as I can command, or how, I really do not know ; but the simple fact is, that not until ten o'clock last night could I make out your letter. It saddened me when I did so, for I assure you that I would more willingly undertake to compose two entire volumes *de novo*, than to weave a coherent whole out of critical fragments.

As to the *title* of the new volume, I am in great perplexity about it, chiefly on grounds which I am anxious to hear your opinion upon ; but with the light, and with the pen that I now have, it would be impossible for me to explain myself fully. . . . What I fear most is the raising expectations of something more pointed and effective than the book (unless upon a larger scale of review) allowed. That is what makes me wish for as unpretending a title as possible. Could the title be made to promise a second, or a second and third sketch? This would break the effect of disappointment.

My dear Sir,—The letter on the *title* which reached me about six p.m., being unfortunately *written in pencil*, cost me three-quarters of an hour, *under bad candlelight*, to decipher. Hence it is that I still am short by two pages of the Preface-

close. The objections to the title, I am sorry to say, strike me as strong; *historic* would, I fear, have the effect anticipated. At the same time, I feel the revised (and duplicated) title very objectionable, and in a way that we should all dislike, viz., as misleading, by promising too much—more than is fulfilled. But if I go on, I shall exhaust and spend upon the air all the energy I have left for winding up the Preface. I will think and report in the morning.

MY DEAR SIR,—In cases of so much hurry, and where the models referred to are not at hand, it is almost impossible to avoid making one's self misunderstood.

Historic, it seems to me, is indispensable to the mere intelligibility of the title, if *Problem* is retained. But the shortest form would be:

STUDIES
ON
SECRET RECORDS:
WITH
OTHER PAPERS.

Perhaps better, if after *Records, Personal and Historic* were introduced, all the rest being left unaltered. . . . To the word *Historic* there is the objection raised; but, unfortunately, *without* it the word "Problems" might mean scientific problems, &c., &c.

On the whole, in our difficulty my vote is for the title as last modified—spite of the *Historic*.

MY DEAR SIR,—I wish to suggest a change in the title of some importance. I think you were quite on the right track in striking out the *items* on the title-page, (1) "Protestantism," (2) "Oracles," &c. But there is left by that elision a serious objection. *Sceptical*, it strikes me, cannot be used *absolutely*, but only in relation to some *assigned* object, known and indicated. If I took for a title the word *Answers*, or the word *Refutations*, it would be asked at once, *Answers to what? Refutations of what?* And in the case before us it will be said, *Sceptical, i.e.*, disposed to doubt, or to suspension of assent, but as to what?

It is true that the word *is* used absolutely in one colloquial case, viz., when we say "Kant was a sceptic; Hume was a sceptic." But even there it is an *elliptic* expression, hardly (I should think) admissible into a title; for we all understand *sceptic*, or *doubter on the doctrines of Christianity*. But this is not at all the meaning in *our* case. Nor again, if this *could* have been the meaning, would it suit the open and explicit purpose of a title to express it otherwise than at length. What I propose, as a mode of surmounting the objection, is:

ESSAYS,
SCEPTICAL AND ANTI-SCEPTICAL,
ON
PROBLEMS NEGLECTED OR MISCONCEIVED.

P.S.—Do not suppose me wedded to my own workmanship. Any title that evades the objection (1) of ellipsis, (2) of the consequent irreligious sense emerging under that ellipsis, will suit me.

This is how he celebrates a certain interruption he had had:—

Tuesday, May 31, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—1. How little you are entitled to count upon the most ordinary chances of luck, you may judge by this. Yesterday afternoon you sent me "The Bookseller," meaning that I should read something in it relating (I believe) to myself. At the moment of beginning to search for this passage, a visitor, female invalid, having made an express and difficult journey, arrives. *Six p.m.*, this visitor comes. *Eight p.m.*, she goes away. But by that time the hour had arrived, conformably to your request, for returning "The Bookseller." Consequently, whatever it might be that you wished me to read, I have *not* read it. And the opportunity of reading it has been intercepted by an event quite as rare in the rolls of *my* experience as an earthquake.

2. You suppose me apparently to have within my memory all the *heads* for an appendix, but simply to be languishing as regards the energy for filling in their outlines or their entire proportions. On the contrary—with the single exception of

the reply to Peregrine*—I do not remember one item in the entire list of notices. If, therefore, you can furnish any of these *heads*, good: if otherwise, *not* good.

One of the most interesting notes in our bundle from his hand, is the following in the beginning of 1859, which will be read, we believe, with no slight interest, on account of its giving his own opinion of that most ingenious essay on the "Toilette of the Hebrew Lady;" and because of the reference it contains to the picture of Coleridge:—

MY DEAR SIR,—Considering its *Biblical* relations, over and above its interest of curiosity, I really think this Hebrew Toilette—*with the exception always of some six or seven*—the best in the collection. But never had I such a tight-rope dancing effort of agility, as in the correction of the six pages (equal, I calculate, to seventeen or eighteen pages of the present types); absolutely the paper is unsized. Why, I fancied such atrocities confined to trans-Atlantic (not even heard of in Cis-Atlantic) literature.

Is there a long foot-note (do you think?), on the enthymeme as restored by Facciolati,† in the paper on rhetoric? Because such a note I found myself walking over this afternoon; and, except by some oversight of mine in *not sending*, I cannot understand how it should find its way under my slipper.

This is a description of S. T. Coleridge's person—not on[illegible] accurate, but the sole accurate among many that are libello[illegible] false—drawn from my own knowledge, guaranteed defying[illegible] myself, and sure to give pleasure in many quarte[illegible]s, but un[illegible] tunately broken off and mutilated by some of the import[illegible] interruptions incident to furious hurry. This, which occur[illegible] the latter half of Coleridge and Opium-Eating—and s[illegible] others interrupted in similar way—if past remedy in the artic[illegible] I could upon knowing *that*, repair the loss in the Preface.

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* Peregrine was a writer who had controverted some of De Quincey's statements respecting Pope.—ED.

† This note, of course, appears in the Essay on Rhetoric.—ED.

As careful readers know, this loss was repaired in the said Preface.

The next are the two last notes we have from De Quincey's hand. They relate to points arising in the preparation of the fourteenth volume, which was not completed at the time of his death. Their date must be in September and October 1859. *The first* is wholly undated, the second wants the year.

MY DEAR SIR,—I do not exactly know what to do :—"Orthographic Mutineers" I have corrected fully for the press, but a page is missing—for which I have searched through two hours, and no doubt it is here, but I have not found it.

I wrote a long letter on Monday night—not yet sent—and I have a few more things still to say. But I am too weary at present (*i.e.*, till resting) to say them.

MY DEAR SIR,—It kills me to write notes, after writing all day upon margins. Neither could I make intelligible, except in conversation, what is the state of the case. So it is—that I exceedingly wish to cancel or delete nearly two pages of the forty on which I have been operating. *The reason* when I see you.

Next.—Seeing that the article on J. P. Richter, in the "London Magazine" of November or December 1821, is by much the most eligible article that occurs to my memory among the unused,—would it not be easy to have this printed by to-morrow night?

My Preface I was obliged to interrupt by the correction of A se forty pages, from which since 8 P.M. I have never raised vis hand except for forty minutes.
jou

From some of the articles which were contributed [redacted] "Hogg's Instructor" and to "Titan" between 50–59, several passages, for one reason or another, ere omitted in "The Collected Writings"—not always intentionally, we incline to believe, since they are in some cases deeply marked by De Quincey's best qualities. One or two of these, chosen mainly for their briefness, we make bold to reproduce here.

The first we shall give stood originally as an introduction to the article on the "Literature of Infancy," but it furnishes us with a humorous and suggestive defence, by the author, of his rambling propensities:

I.

At this point (and why exactly at this point is a caprice of Nature, which it rests upon *her* to explain) I pause, and must pause, in order to indulge an instinct of rambling. It is an intermitting necessity affecting my particular system, like that of migration that affects swallows, or the moulting of feathers that affects birds in general. Nobody is angry with swallows for vagabondising periodically, and surely I have a better right to indulgence than a swallow: I take precedency of a swallow in any company whatsoever. Indulgent or not, however, the reader must really put up with my infirmity. Being thwarted and thrown back upon the constitution, in me this impulse might produce some malady (typhus fever, perhaps); whereas, to the reader, the worst effect of it will be that he must take a flying leap over a page or two if he dislikes the interruption. Yet what evil is there in an interruption? It is a kind of rest, or, as Coleridge used to style it, a *landing-place* in a flight of stairs. Call it a *parenthesis*, as do all writers—call it an *excursus*, as do all German commentators—call it an episode* as do all narrative poets—and the mom

* "Episode:"—It is a singular instance of the miserable superficiality everywhere distributed, since the diffusion of what is nicknamed education, by the wretch calling himself *the schoolmaster abroad*, that several works have been published professedly

tary interruption, instead of a blemish, comes to be regarded as the prime luxury and *bonne bouche* of the whole work.

The link, a very slight one, which connects this coming ramble with the rest of the paper, may seem to be simply chronologic: such it will appear, I know, to the general reader. But, even supposing him right, chronology is a thing not to be despised. It is certain that the literary memorabilia, which I am going to summon back from my childish annals, did at the very least synchronise with the other incidents of this record; they agreed with them so far, viz., in point of time, if they had no other relation; which, yet, to my belief, they really had, if I could but find it out, as perhaps in some future generation I shall. Besides, if not, answer me the question; things worthy in themselves to be noticed, are they to be omitted and disregarded altogether, merely because no opening arises naturally, or can be devised artificially, for working them into the general texture of the woof? On the contrary, if they cannot be interwoven whilst in the loom, let them (if otherwise worthy of such a separate care) be subsequently sewed on as a fringe, even pinned on as a patch.

The next appeared in "Hogg's Instructor," in April 1852. The first paragraph was afterwards embodied in the "Autobiographic Sketches," the

designating themselves in the title-page by the name of "episodes," as though anything whatever could be an episode *absolutely*, or separated from its relation to some larger whole in which it constitutes a secondary or parenthetical fraction.

latter portion, as not bearing on the subject, was at the time omitted. But what under the title of "Infant Literature" was considered a digression, may not inappropriately be marked here as

II.

A young officer (in what army, no matter) had so far forgotten himself, in a moment of sudden irritation, as to strike a private soldier, full of personal dignity (as sometimes happens in all ranks), and distinguished for his courage. The inexorable laws of military discipline, forbade to the injured soldier any opening for retaliation by acts. Words only were at his command; and, in a tumult of indignation, as he turned away, he said to his officer that he would "make him repent it." This, wearing the shape of a menace, naturally rekindled the officer's anger, and intercepted any disposition which might be rising within him towards a sentiment of remorse; and thus the irritation between the two young men grew hotter than before. Some weeks after this a partial action took place with the enemy. Suppose yourself a spectator, and looking down into a valley occupied by the two armies. They are facing each other, you see, in martial array. But it is no more than a skirmish which is going on, in the course of which, however, an occasion suddenly arises for desperate service. A redoubt, which has fallen into the enemy's hands, must be recaptured at any price, and under circumstances of all but hopeless difficulty. A strong party has volunteered for the service; there is a cry for somebody to lead them; you see a soldier step out from the ranks to assume this dangerous

leadership; the party moves rapidly forward; in a few minutes it is swallowed up from your eyes in clouds of smoke; for one half-hour from behind these clouds, you receive telegraphic reports of the bloody strife which is there proceeding—fierce repeating signals, in the shape of flashes from the guns of rolling musketry, and of exulting hurrahs advancing or receding, slackening or redoubling. At length all is over; the redoubt has been recovered; that which was lost is found again; the jewel which had been made captive is ransomed with blood. A fresh party has been detached to re-enter into possession of the immortal slaughter-house; and now, therefore, the surviving remnant of the conquerors, crimsoned with glorious gore, is at liberty triumphantly to return, and to pass through innumerable stations of gratulating comrades, until it reaches those head-quarters where its gathering honours will receive a consecrating seal. Watch the party as it returns; watch the party that an hour since hurried off so eagerly and rapidly towards agony, and hungering after death; how slowly does it march back again towards rest and security! Up from the ...er banks you behold it reascending; you see the ... shreds and blackened ribbons of what once was ... banner; you see the enthusiastic officer, who com... ...nds in this particular wing of the army, stepping ...ward in uncontrollable haste to salute with ...otherly love the noble fraction of the self-devoted; ... the noble leader is now seen to be no more than ... private from the ranks. But in the epilepsy of ...speechless admiration—in the frenzy of that love which burns in the human heart towards all demon-

strations of willing martyrdom, towards all *sublime* courtship of the grave, distinctions perish; ranks are broken down and confounded; "high" and "low" are words without a meaning, and every difference dividing the brave from the brave, and the noble from the noble, is trampled under foot as by acclamation. You wonder not, therefore, at the rapture of the plume-crested officer, as he rushes forward to seize with his right hand that of the private soldier in front, and with his left hand raises his hat in homage to the storm-wrecked fragment of a flag. The officer and the private sentinel are now within ten paces of each other. You saw no mystery in the fervour with which they approached; but now, being face to face, wherefore is it that for a moment they pause? *That* perplexes you. Once before, O reader! these men had been face to face. Once again they are face to face, and the gaze of armies is upon them. The soldier, who is *he?* The officer, who is *he?* It is the soldier that was struck; it is the officer that struck him. The officer it is that suffered himself, under some provocation, perhaps imaginary, perhaps misconstrued, to treat as a hound one whom he now honours as a hero. The soldier it is that, by accumulating a sevenfold provocation upon what originally, in his meaning, had been none at all, left rankling in the hearts both of himself and of his erring enemy a corroding malice. They paused: yet why? Was it that either distrusted his own heart? Not so. Each could answer for himself, but neither could feel secure in answering for the other. The doubt lasted but for a second. One glance exchanged between them published the

forgiveness that was mutually granted and accepted. With the trepidation of one recovering a brother whom he had accounted dead, the officer sprang forward, threw his arms about the neck of the soldier and kissed him, as if he were some saint glorified by that shadow of death from which he was returning; whilst on *his* part, the soldier, stepping back, and carrying his open hand through the beautiful motions of the military salute to a superior, made his immortal answer—that answer which shut up for ever the memory of the indignity offered to him, even whilst for the last time alluding to it—"Sir," he said, "I told you that I would *make you repent it.*"

O penitence! how deep *that* must have been which searched a heart thus suddenly converted from wrath through the agency of one generous human sympathy! O vengeance! how sweet, perfect, and crowning, that could reconcile in a moment the purpose of hell-born malice with the most difficult injunction of Christianity. All the purposes of the soldier centred in triumph—triumph over the man that had dishonoured him by a blow; and this triumph he had had beyond all imagination and the uttermost presumption of hope, but in a mode that disarmed its malice, and in one moment reconciled him for ever with the object of his hatred.

Such a result, under any other religion than Christianity, would have been an impossibility, and not only so but also an incomprehensibility. Now, as the mode of viewing things proper to a pagan still remains intelligible to a Christian, though inversely, the Christian mode of view could not be made in-

telligible to a pagan, it follows that we who enjoy the intellectual advantages of Christianity stand upon an isthmus from which we survey two worlds; so that from this double station of view the impossible becomes possible, and consequently the sublimity which belongs to the conquest of the impossible.

But to return, and to conclude my ramble over the fields of my childish literature, the object of which was to gather for you a slight posy, or nosegay (as we English call it), or "flower" * (as the Scotch unaccountably call it), or anthology, as erudite people call it, composed of the *élite* amongst those passages only which had acted as awakening powers upon the mind of a child between the ages of five and a half and eight. The particular story which I have cited from Dr. Percival, both my sister and myself pronounced the very finest we had anywhere read; and, after this, we could neither of us adopt in its whole extent my mother's jealousy as to the doctor's piety.

* "*Flower*."—In Scotland, which might easily pass undiscovered for years by an alien, since the natural sense of the world would be endurable wherever the Scotch conventional sense would be so, the term *flower* is most strangely used for a collection of flowers or bouquet. How this ever could have arisen is beyond my power of guessing. Extending a little the philosophy of this remark, I may assert boldly that a Scotchman in the English courts, or an Englishman in the Scotch courts, might easily bring himself within the penalties of perjury by alternate misunderstandings of words that approach each other without coinciding. For instance, if a homely or cockney Scotchman (that is a Scotchman who has never been out of Scotland nor liberalised his domestic bigotry) were to swear that such a man was a tradesman, or to swear with respect to such an area of ground that it was a *park*, [illegible] he would make himself liable to an indictment [illegible]

That man must be pious who told so beautiful and pious a story. As to Monsieur d'Alembert and his "wife," as Dr. Percival used to call the great work of the Paris infidels, viz., "Madame Encyclopédie," they might be very wicked people, and might be striving by means of letters to make Dr. Percival as wicked as themselves, but it was evident to us that they had not succeeded. Here I desist from my ramblings, and you understand by this time why I allowed myself to ramble at all. The literature of an infant, its preferences and memorable experiences, and, above all, a circumstantial account of those passages in its reading which were awakening enough to shock, to startle, and awe-strike, or profound enough to become lifelong remembrances, would unquestionably (if recorded with the sincerity of self-attesting truth which I have made it a point of religion to observe) most profitably enlarge the drowsy realms of psychology. I, for instance, persist in believing a sublimity which

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the south of the Tweed, and *vice versa*. So essentially do these, and some hundreds of words beside, differ in accurate analysis, whilst unfortunately they come near enough in general outline to tempt unwary people into the dangerous and perjury-haunted use of them. A *tradesman*, for instance, in England, means essentially, one who is *not* a journeyman; one who does *not* work under a master, but is himself a master. In Scotland this is exactly reversed; the capitalist who furnishes the wages is *not* a tradesman, but the working journeyman who receives them. So, again, of the word *merchant*, which in England designates none but wholesale importers and exporters, and by no possibility a retail dealer or shopkeeper, whilst in Scotland it means nothing else. So of *doctor;* in England nothing is esteemed so vulgar, or, in fact, is so confined to uneducated people as to call a surgeon or apothecary *Doctor* So-and-so. In Scotland this practice is universal.

I could not understand. It was, in fact, one of those many important cases which elsewhere I have called *involutes* of human sensibility; combinations in which the materials of future thought or feeling are carried as imperceptibly into the mind as vegetable seeds are carried in various states of combination through the atmosphere, or by means of rivers, into remote countries. One eternal babble we hear about Lord Bacon, and not theorising (by which all respectable blockheads mean *à priorising*, a far different thing), but relying only on experience: the truth being, that as soon as ever any the most positive experience does not quadrate with popular ideas, as in mesmeric phenomena, everybody treats the experience with laughter and scorn, showing thus the most obstinate hostility to Lord Bacon. The passages which I have recorded as so durably affecting to myself are not gathered from books; the reader sees that they report real and not counterfeit experiences.

The following, on the "Scottish Universities," which might be regarded as a little too exact and pedagogic, where it was originally placed in "A Sketch from Childhood," in "Hogg's Instructor," for February 1852, is yet so discriminating and suggestive that it shall be ranked by us as

III.

The defect in those universities is this—that one and all they provide for the diffusion of knowledge, but not for its extension; for its life, but not for its growth; they cherish knowledge as a means to a

certain limited end, but not as an end in itself. Take, for instance, theology. So much of this as may seem requisite by way of qualification for the discharge of a clergyman's professional duties the universities undertake to furnish. Upon such a scheme what is the result? Precisely this, that the knowledge itself, the great moving and expansible system of theology, from generation to generation, remains stationary; for exactly what each separate *alumnus* carries away, after being applied to his immediate professional purposes, perishes with himself. The universities are in this case governed by the example of the Church. The Church makes it her very boast that through the absence of pluralities, and through a republican equalisation of emoluments in all but her great cities (where least of all any remedy can be applied to the evil, because *pari passu* with the emoluments increases the professional labour), she has laid her whole army of ministers under a fierce necessity of working. She declares that for her part she has no room for idlers. That might be well; but, unfortunately, the term *idlers* in such a case includes the most laborious class of all, viz., those who do not profess to work the machinery of a parish, but the machinery of an infinite science. Where all are yoked to the service of daily life, who can be available for speculation? Where all are working pioneers and diggers in the trenches, what provision is made for the improvement of the engineering science itself? And the contagion from the Church has naturally spread to the universities. As the Church has no sinecures, and no golden prizes, securing quiet sanctuaries for theological study, so the universities offer

no body of fellowships or other endowment as retreats for learned leisure. And such small "bursaries" or "exhibitions" as the Scottish college system offers, in a proportion so meagre by comparison with the English scale, are never applicable to the needs of the mature student, who might be supposed capable of improving his own branch of knowledge, but exclusively to those of the juvenile student, who is himself only a learner.

Evil consequences have arisen from this state of things. Whilst the Established Church of England, and the Church of Rome, have built up a vast theological literature—the contribution of countless labourers working in silent and successive co-operation, through a period of three and a half centuries in the case of England, and of many more in the case of Rome—from the Scottish Church we have had no great gladiatorial work in defence of some cardinal doctrine common to all Christendom, such as Bishop Bull's work on the "Trinity," or common to all anti-papal Christendom, such as Chillingworth's "Religion of Protestants;" nor even any special defence of her own creed and separate constitution, such as Jewel's "Apology," or Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity." No Jackson, Field, Usshe:, Saunderson, Hammond, Barrow, Stillingfleet, Waterland, Butler. And why? Simply because the constitution of church and universities has secured no opening or asylum to learned leisure. The strange result has thus been accomplished, that in Scotland the *clerus* or clergy is not the clerical or clerkly body of the nation; is not (as elsewhere) the main depositary of the national erudition and literature. The *clerus*, in

that sense, is not, nor ever has been, for Scotland, the ecclesiastical body, but the legal body, and especially the faculty of advocates. And hence a second startling consequence has arisen, viz., that but for the fortunate interposition of another profession, trained to a more extensive learning, and but for the lucky accident that the larger section of this body is left at leisure from any weight of professional engagements, the whole nation ran the greatest risk of being conspicuously illiterate. In our own days a literature might readily be called into existence, almost might be improvised, on the mere impulse of imitation; but, in earlier stages of society, no literature can easily arise, or continue to support itself steadily, which is not fed from unintermitting fountains in some learned profession. In Scotland this profession was the legal profession. Upon that body, in the absence of a learned clergy, devolved the burthen of keeping alive the torch of national illumination. The faculty of advocates mainly, or perhaps exclusively, took up the functions properly belonging to the clergy, but which lay on the ground as derelicts abandoned by *them*. Not only have they furnished the majority of labourers in the field of literature, but also for those labourers *not* furnished by themselves, they have raised the standard of excellence, and liberalised the tone of thinking. Even such of the clergy as did enter that field, probably were led to do so by the authentic example of the Scottish bar; so that, on the whole, for two centuries at the least, not the clergy, not the ecclesiastical body, no, nor any part of that body, but simply the juridical body, stood between the Scottish nation and the pestilence of utter illiteracy. The

Scottish bar, the College of Justice, and, according to their proportion, the incorporation of Writers to the Signet, were the salt of the land, seasoned it against the all-corroding ravages of time and ignorance, and founded a permanent fund of motives to great actions, civil or martial, in the consciousness that, under the imperishable light of literature, such services could never again be lost and confounded in any vortex of oblivion.

Latin, the great key for laying open the arsenals and armouries of civilisation—Latin, of which it may be said, that if any new Jacquerie, such as Red Republicanism, or a communistic crusade against property, could for a moment of eclipse succeed in levelling with the dust our most pompous trophies of human advancement, simply through this language uttering itself in the most colossal of human monuments, viz., the Pandects of Justinian, might we in three years build again that temple of civilisation which we had idly supposed to be in ruins;—Latin has always been a privileged and consecrated study in Scotland. The eldest of her Latinists were her best; the eldest chronologically were the most graceful, plastic, and accomplished. Ruddiman, in comparatively modern times, was a silver scholar; Barclay, Bellenden, Dempster, Buchanan, &c., in elder days, were scholars wrought out of gold, or out of silver gilt; that is, because they wielded the Latin as a native dialect. And it is no doubt due originally to the Scottish bar, as an offshoot from the landed aristocracy, that the pride of birth and ancient blood, which, when in a state of insulation, wears so harsh and repulsive an air, learned to humanise and

colour itself attractively by courting an alliance with the graces of literature. A Scottish military officer throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, could no more dissociate from his normal picture of the decorums proper to his rank a certain polish founded in the humanities of literature than he could dissociate from that rank the humanities of manner and courtesy, or the obligations of honour. Sir Walter Scott's Baron of Bradwardyn embodies that complex ideal. Everybody feels that, next after an act of cowardice in the field, or secondly, an act of swindling, or thirdly, an act of niggardliness to a guest sitting by his own hearth-stone under the grim smile of the blessed bear—these treasons excepted (for as such the baron would have viewed them), the noble old soldier would have shrunk with deepest sense of shame from any gross case of ignorance or misinterpretation applied to the text of his "Titus Livius." For a clergyman this sort of knowledge (classical knowledge) had barely a mercenary value, as one amongst his working tools; but for a gentleman or a high-bred cavalier, this same tincture of classic knowledge, and of classic sympathies, having no mercenary or economic value whatever, upon that very argument rose to the dignity of some crowning heraldic decoration, crest, or badge conferred by royalty, that trebled its imaginative value, because it had not a pension annexed to it.

Latin literature, therefore, preserved itself from degradation or absolute extinction, simply amongst lawyers, as a body who blended the two characters of men partially aristocratic and also of scholars by professional necessity. One moiety of the double

character, viz., aristocratic pretensions, which formed the link connecting them with soldiers of rank, with landed proprietors, with magistrates, with men of fashion and *ton*, naturally had a tendency to transplant into those classes the other moiety, viz., the scholarship. And hence it arose intelligibly enough that classic literature, so far as it rode by the single anchor of Latinity, never was submerged in Scotland; though if it had been left to the nursing care of the provincial clergy, it would have foundered utterly, except within those four harbours of refuge for unpopular "humanities"—Glasgow and Edinburgh, St. Andrew's and Aberdeen. But, thanks to expansion of intellect worked by law, an accomplished advocate (such as Sir George Mackenzie, for instance), could no more have dispensed with Latin, than with his daily bread or with his nightly claret. Latin, therefore, was abundantly safe. But now as to Greek? Whose business was it to take care of *that?* "Not *ours*," would be the clamorous outcry of the clergy; "we have no time. Besides, we side traditionally with Hector and the Trojans, and set our faces on principle against the rascally Greeks." With more reason by much, the [redacted] body might have put forward the same plea; whilst divinity cannot move without Greek, no literature whatever—not Hebrew, not Persic, not [redacted] scrit—is less able to communicate with law by any reciprocal offices of advantage than is the Greek. What can Greek do for the modern law, what can law do for Greek? Here, therefore, that vicarious resource for the interests of ancient literature, which in the case of its Latin half had been supplied to

Scotland by the legal profession, naturally failed; so that Greek literature languished in Scotland by a languor which too nearly resembled death; and but for the re-animation occasionally applied to this drooping interest by the resort of Scottish students to Baliol * College, Oxford, possibly the very shadow of such an interest would have faded from the land. And yet, in this utter prostration of all that could pretend to the name of a *national* regard for Greek literature, fallen though this regard had into the chance-keeping of individuals, it is remarkable that amongst those individuals, the most distinguished were advocates."

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* *To Baliol College*, and also in some small proportion to other colleges in Oxford, not benefiting at all, like Baliol, by any royal munificence of Scotland.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOTHIAN STREET.

"42 LOTHIAN STREET" was an address very familiar to De Quincey's friends, or to curious literary persons, for a long period of years. We have so headed this chapter, because the Lothian Street life ran alongside the Mavis Bush life in a very unique way, and to it we are indebted for a more plenteous relay of letters than for other periods. The reason which Mrs. Baird Smith gives in the following note doubtless had some share in the result:—

In all these times, when there seems to have been no lett
we were within easy reach. After my elder sister's ma
the increase of notes to us at Lasswade seems to me a
what pathetic sign of a struggle between his perfect tr
us and a consciousness that it was not a usual course of
to leave two young women so entirely alone in a solitary
place; and of course he felt this even more when my
sister was left. He really could not manage his work fa
from the press, and nothing which would have been natura
other cases, such as my sister removing into Edinburgh, wo
have answered with him; so that it really came quite naturall
about our keeping the cottage at Lasswade ready to receive him
when he felt inclined for it, especially as it was a very friendly

home for us, which Edinburgh had ceased to be, as we knew few people there.

The point brought out in that note should be particularly borne in mind. Strange as were De Quincey's ways in many points, he was always from the death of his wife in communication with his daughters, either personally or by letters. His habit of walking considerable distances to visit them, if he were in lodgings for the sake of nearness to the press, is alone to be taken to account for the absence of letters during lengthened periods. If he did not see them often, he always wrote to them regularly; and the self-denial exercised in the performance of that pleasant duty can only be realised when his general dislike of letter-writing, his age and his feebleness, are taken into account. We have seen that he acted as sole tutor to his sons, and that to no point involving the welfare of his family was he indifferent. What is really remarkable, is the closeness of his concern for them, in association with such simplicity, absence, pre-occupation, and erratic ways. The first inroad on that happy unity of the Lasswade household, which we have already found him [illegible]turing in a letter to Miss Mitford, took place in 185[illegible] when his eldest daughter, Margaret, married [illegible]art Craig, the son of a neighbour.* Mr. Robert [illegible] purchased land in Tipperary, as Miss Mitford

[illegible] was John Craig, who was well known in connection [illegible]e Scotch Whigs, and took an active part in the move- [illegible]of Parliamentary Reform in 1794–1809, being a corre- [illegible]dent of Lord Jeffrey, Mrs. Fletcher, and many others. He [illegible]te one or two books, amongst them an elaborate work on [illegible]olitical Science. He died at the patriarchal age of ninety-four, at his son's house in Ireland.

hints, and the couple immediately on their marriage went and settled there, first residing at a place called Pegsborough, and afterwards at Lisheen.

In 1854, his daughters Florence and Emily were in Ireland, on the occasion of the birth of a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Craig. The way in which the old man's thoughts circle round that grandchild, and constantly return to her from the most diverse excursions, causing him to write almost daily letters, is, indeed, very touching. We shall give a few selected specimens—no better than the rest, but full of felicities of thought and expression, and bright with that gentle humour that so characterised him; and we doubt not that the reader will readily forgive the preponderance of matters of family interest, as we can thus better than almost by any other means show what Mr. de Quincey's later years really were, and the subjects that most occupied his mind.

Friday, September 29, 1854.

My Dear Emily,—I received yesterday your letter announcing the good news from Tipperary. To-night or to-morrow I will write to M. I am glad, according to my ancient doctrine, that it is a *daughter*—not a son. For I differ altogether from Señor de Erauso (papa of Catalina) on this question of comparative pretensions between sons and daughters. How the equation may stand in Biscay I cannot judge; but as [illegible] our own insular world, I look upon boys as the dreadful nuisance of society. This little Tipperar[illegible] instance, in less than ten or twelve months will be [illegible] as the liveliest of playthings. But a surly boy, after [illegible] five or six years without finding the proper use of his [illegible] would be first beginning to suspect a pugnacious valu[illegible] fists. By the time when the new little Flor. (if such [illegible] be her name) will have lived a long life, with incidents [illegible] thoughts many enough to fill three octavos, the wretch of a [illegible] would be dimly developing his first foggy ideas on the subject of orchard-robbing. I take considerable interest in the question

of *name*. Eva is good, but not to my feeling *so* good when in combination as singly. Grace is a pet Irish name; but, I suppose, there is no excuse in any family tradition for this. —Ever yours affectionately.

Shortly after this, he writes respecting the christening:—

October, 1854.

My Dear Emily,—To you, as being (I think) my latest *adviser** from Tipperary, I address my answer. Bear with me if I am abrupt or incoherent: perhaps *that* is better than being tedious. Strange it is that I, who have three fair daughters gifted with a marked talent (two in promise, and M. in full development) for letter-writing, can yet pretend myself to so little power in that direction. And that little grows less when, from profound sedentariness, I grow preternaturally nervous.

First of all, concerning what is just now first in importance, viz., dear little Eva. Glad I am that she has gotten herself a name, for really it is an awkward case, when giving the health at a dinner-party of a little lady, as one's own sole representative in the next generation but one, the advanced *vedette* on the frontier of posterity, plainly to confess that she is anonymous, and also a Pagan, or at least that the Pagan question is for *her* still an open question. *Any* name therefore was beginning to be an advantage. As to the particular name chosen, it is to *my* feeling a very pretty one. Two novels at the least have been written by men of high pretensions bearing this name for their sole title; one by Sir Edward Lytton, which perhaps I have not read, but certainly do not remember,—the [illegible]y a man whom I think of with even more respect, viz., [illegible]. It was not, however, by any means amongst Maturin's [illegible]rks. Still, being Maturin's, it could not be otherwise [illegible]resting. Maturin's Eva, if I remember the story at [illegible] subject of an odious persecution from some hyper-[illegible]eatner-bed of a *soi-disant* lover, who does not improve [illegible]tion, or at all win upon the sulky reader, by being also [illegible]enting parson. His reasons for dissenting I do not know, [illegible]the reader's reasons are undeniable—'*first chop*'—for dis-[illegible]ing from the Rev. Featherbed; and, unfortunately for *him*,

* "*Adviser*," sender of *advices*, i.e., of news or intelligence.

Eva's dissenting principles are equally strong; but then, unfortunately for *her*, the odious and reverend lover draws some iniquitous support from a dissenting aunt. The issue, I fear, is tragical. The true lover, he whom Eva and the reader countenance, is non-suited. Such, at least, is my fear. And it is a proof of Maturin's power that now, at this moment, though left behind me by thirty years, the tale and the very name of Eva are nevertheless set and steeped in some indistinct haze of sorrowful impressions, whilst my separate remembrances of the fable are no more than what I have related. Simply through the power of Maturin, who was verily and indeed a man of genius, the name of *Eva* has shaped itself to my symbolising fancy in the image of a white rose—overcharged (I do not say *surcharged*, as suggesting odious thoughts of income-tax) with rain or heavy dews—dimly descried in a solitary garden through the very dimmest twilight of earliest dawn upon a morning of June. Is this too much for a conscientious man to pack up into that one little tri-literal name of *Eva*.

This name naturally throws back one's thoughts upon the original person who bore it—that unhappy lady, the fairest of her own daughters, but also, one must suppose, the most woe-begone, if she knew the extent of her own trespass. "*For this we may thank Adam!*" is the dreadful cry of reproach ascending from billions of generations which the Miltonic Adam figures to himself in sad anticipation. But, begging his pardon, he had himself, like a veritable sneak, forestalled that reproach. He had, in the language of London villains, "split" upon his partner—the very last baseness even amongst our domestic rogues, that final and crowning step which, being foreborne, leaves even to the thief a conscious arrearage of nobili possible redemption. A man that should have stolen handkerchief might (I conceive), by some memorabl public service, redeem himself, but— . . . Thi matter of naming, however, if we cast a backward glan earliest beginnings, though an inscrutable, would—we so—be an interesting theme for investigation. It is no prehistoric, but a premythical, not only a premythica even a prefabulous and a pretraditional thesis. *My* th ends by indicating in Eve one feature of intellectual delica which places her in advance of her species by perhaps a myri of generations, and to this recent baptismal epoch in the fir

year of dear little Eva's experience it is a most appropriate feature—renewing and reverberating from a modern case echoes of the very same solicitude in the proper choice of a name as naturally displayed itself in the very earliest cases. Eve, like the council of Pegsboro', put forth an earnest anxiety (for earnest it must have been to secure any commemoration at all in a record necessarily so austerely condensed as the Mosaic) in order to construct a significant name for her sons. On a hasty consideration it might seem as though Pegsboro' and Mesopotamia [which, or else Kurdistan, or else Armenia, I will assume to be the region inhabited by the primitive household of man] had pursued a separate and peculiar object in this study. But perhaps not. Eve sought for a name that should, by a sort of shorthand, express significantly any pathetic circumstantialities connected with the birth (or with the immediate antecedences to the birth) of the particular son concerned in the nomination. Events or changes externally attached to the biography of the child were naturally contemplated as the keynotes for the several names; so that the bare names of Eve's sons composed a solemn register—cryptical and shadowy, as being abstracts so severely condensed, but to herself fearfully significant, as secret mementoes of sad or joyous revolutions. For the Pegsboro' council, on the other hand, the names were sought—not at all with any view to incidents or household changes, but as expressing qualities of intellect, of temper, or of temperament which might reasonably be anticipated in a spirit of hope, since, even when naturally defective, by artificial culture any qualities may be indefinitely promoted. And therefore it is a most rational justification of a name to *m*[illegible]inking—not that it expresses a quality as emphatically e[illegible]g at a time when powers are latent, but forecasts the po[illegible]e growth and fructification of the tendencies and faculties whi[illegible]it signifies.

I h[illegible] this very commonplace incident sets him a speculating; he runs over all the passing details, and tries to find a principle underlying the act and the necessity of naming, and brightens up his notes by the quaintest fun, as naïve, we think, as it is suggestive.

The "tri-literality" of the name does not escape him

either, and leads him in the next letter to some classical references which are at once whimsical and illustrative :—

November 18, 1854.

My Dear Florence,—I have written more letters to Pegsborough than without an affidavit you would believe. One I wrote to Emily, and a letter of eleven pages, last night. But when it drew near to its end, on retrospection of these eleven pages, it seemed to me that nine and a half were prosy or in some other way objectionable. Another, and I believe equally long letter, I wrote—how long shall we say?—perhaps ten days ago to you. But this contained so large a proportion of absolute nonsense, that I could not resolve to send it. You will suggest that I may be too severe a censor. Possibly, but the letters are still extant, and, when you come home, will speak for themselves. At present I will write only on two points :—

1. As to dear little Eva, I rejoiced to hear that she had obtained a name, which is besides a very pretty name, and quite big enough for the present. But with the Romans of old *vir trium literarum* (a tri-literal man—a three-lettered man) was in bad repute ; it was a comic expression for Fur, which unhappily means a thief; in fact, the Romans had no proper name that could be spelt with so few as three letters. But leaving proper names, and passing to what grammarians call appellatives (words not expressing an individual, but a class or species), these shorted-sighted men should have remembered that not Fur only, but the first of all words, viz., Vir, a man, is equally a tri-literal word. The greatest I call it, because from this word is derived Virtus—manliness, courage, virtue. Here's a rigmarolish paragraph, you say, about such a trifle as tri-literality. But if a tri-literal man is justly exposed to the scorn of that wise old Roman people as a *Guy* (Fawkes), a man of straw, or (to Anglicise it by a three-lettered equivalent) as a Jum, what shall we think of a *double* tri-literality? Why Emily, or rather *not* simply but compositely, that he is or self of a be styled a Hum-Bug.

2. On Thursday last but one, viz., on Thursday, Nov[illegible] which 9, famous in London as Lord Mayor's Day, and nationally is, I it not ?) as Prince of Wales's birthday, I returned to the p[illegible] had my final revision of the Prefatory Notices to my fourth vol., so that any delay *since* then, be it known to Pegsborough, is due

to some vile tri-literal man, who may take his choice of the names already provided for his use, viz., FUR, HUM, BUG—any or all of them. However, I understand that, in spite of any such criminal person, ranging about like a lion and seeking whom he may delay, one copy finished and bound reached London by the express train *via* Newcastle of Monday morning, Nov. 13, and was in the hands of the London trade throughout the forenoon of that Monday for the purpose of being "*subscribed*," as it is technically called (that is, presented by Mr. Groombridge's runners to each considerable publisher for a minute or so, in order that he may assign the particular number of copies which he separately requires). On Friday last I myself received a copy; and could therefore have sent one to Pegsborough; but recollecting that you had seen the American edition, I felt that there was no call for any special hurry. However, there is one novelty, viz., an account of the murders perpetrated by Williams in 1812, which may a little interest you, and therefore I will forward a copy on Monday.

As he was interested in all the joys, and hopes, and cares of his family and each member of it, so, as we shall see, he tried to make them sharers of his labours and pleasures. They were his confidants and fellow-helpers.

The following to Mrs. Craig on her recovery will tell its own tale:—

Tuesday Night, December 5, 1854.

MY DEAREST MARGARET,—I felicitate you upon your recovery, upon the beauty of little Eva, and upon the prospect (not by any means unimportant) that she, with her earliest capacities of enjoyment, will find herself in the grandest of all spectacles —viz. in the carnival of spring. What I mean is, that her bi[illegible]s been felicitously timed; for grandeur would be thrown [illegible]on the eye that cannot connect, and upon the ear that [illegible] distinguish. In April next, when dear little Eva [illegible]ve completed her sixth month, when, first of all, she [illegible]e capable of enjoying, there will be something *extra* to [illegible]y. That is, speaking Germanically, and therefore pedanti[illegible]lly, as the *subjective* (viz., the power of spectating) will then be in the very meridian of its development in Eva, so corre-

spondingly will the *objective* (viz., the thing to be spectated, or in base vulgar the spectacle), be travelling for three months—April, May, June—through all the stages of its revelation. *Before* April, for want of developed faculties in Eva, any spectacle would be thrown away. *After* April, when she will be ready, yet if spring were not ready, her powers would be thrown away for want of an object. But now, you understand, since (as Shakespeare luminously insists) that, that is, is—not to waste words on proving that *that*, that will be, in all probability will be—therefore it follows that, taking Eva as the centre of a secret and insulated world, the contemplating and the contemplated, the beholding and the thing beheld, the subject and the object, will blossom concurrently. Neither will outrun the other. No pulse of Eva's sensibilities will perish for want of an object, no day of loveliness will perish for want of an observer. Eva, therefore, is invoked loudly by the coming spring as the reader of the silent legend. Spring is invoked by the tutelary genius of Eva as the lock whose secret wards made known to itself the powers of the key which deciphers them.

There, now, is a metaphysical flourish of trumpets in glorification of Eva; and very seriously it is true, that with the earliest of her self-revealing faculties will coincide the almighty spectacle of a resurrection in nature. A great internal revolution in herself will concur with a great physical revolution outside. And this I have always regarded as a signal privilege of a child.

In the next letter, his old need of access to papers makes him press for the speedy return of his daughters to Mavis Bush :—

December 8, 1854.

My Dearest Florence,—This morning—viz., Monday, December 4th,—came into my hands your letter and [illegible]'s appendix. I had, however, previously possessed myself of [illegible] pen, and was in visionary conceit tracing out, whilst [illegible] aware of any communication from Tipperary, that lette[illegible] now, three hours later, I am actually writing. The fac[illegible] am alarmed at the premature explosion of a train which I [illegible] laid on Saturday (December 2d) for drawing your attenti[illegible] in a leisurely way to Mavis Bush. The match has ignited the

train far sooner than I had counted on. And thus it is possible enough that you may be thrown into needless hurry. It had happened that on Saturday the 2d, Mr. Findlay called, as sometimes he is kind enough to do, and on my explaining the general course of my correspondence with you—viz., that I write a letter—parboil it, as you may say, *i.e.*, half-finish it, then order it, in House of Commons phrase, "to lie on the table," during which repose several strata of other papers gather over it within a few days or hours, so that very soon it is "snowed up," and finally it withdraws into darkness. Hearing this, I say, Mr. Findlay kindly undertook to apprise you, or M. or E., how the matter stood, and that the time was drawing near when I should want various papers (now at Mavis Bush) for the fifth volume. This service I counted on his fulfilling about four or five days later. But, behold! yesterday being Sunday, the very next succeeding day he called with a "Times" newspaper, and at the same time left a note informing me that he already *had* written—viz., not to any one of you three, but to Mr. Craig. I am anxious, therefore, as the train is actually fired, to intercept any evil consequences. I announce, therefore, that if you could set off ten or eleven days from this, *i.e.*, about the 18th day of December, you will meet the most clamorous of my purposes. You see there are counter-perils to weigh off against the perils of procrastination. I declare it will be a lesson to me for the rest of my life not to hurry.

Also I am in your debt, as offered some months back, £9, and this, if you want it with a view to the servants at Pegsborough, I can send by return of post in a post-office order. If not, I might as well pay it here *when you come.*

I could not have avoided the cost of lodging here, such is the killing nervousness of the condition when one is haunted daily by an emissary of the press, whom, as a fifteen-mile traveller, it becomes about impossible to dismiss without his load of pothooks, when, as here, I could say call again to-morrow. I am sure that I could not have stood it. So I reconcile myself to the cost, else it would vex me. Twenty to twenty-two weeks I have been here, at a cheaper rate, it is true, by comparing with Glasgow or London; yet on an average spending as nearly as possible twenty shillings a week, washing included. Add laudanum, brandy, and library subscription. I have spent four guineas more, and being killed with cold, I shall by means of clothes have spent

hard upon thirty pounds when I leave. However, I owe not a fraction of debt—all is paid; and Mr. Hogg informs me that in spite of the *Crimea*, which operates dismally against literature, the fourth volume (viz., the last) has been welcomed by the trade in London much more zealously than the preceding three, and that this reawakening of the public attention is already *reacting upon the others.* I should long ago have sent the volume to you under ordinary circumstances. What delayed it was—(1) since I saw you last I have never once been out of doors; (2) I fancied you had seen most of it in the American edition. But I now remember that there is one addition not without interest —viz., an account of Williams' murder in London, subjoined by way of postscript to "Murder as one of the Fine Arts." It is, however, preposterously long, but that was owing to dire nervousness. I am now fitting myself out for facing the winds, and—but nonsense; on consideration, I will put the *machinery in motion.*

The following may be read with interest on account of its references to two questions of public concern in those days—points on which he was most anxious that his daughters should be enlightened, and in which they should be interested:—

Thursday, January 11, 1855

My Dear Emily,—I wrote a long letter to Florence on Sunday last, January 7, but, as I did not send it, perhaps in strict equity I ought not to look for an answer. *Why* did I not send it? Partly because I saw no proper *envelope* lying ready, though I found one next morning, and I might therefore after all have sent it. But chiefly I condemned it as being too monotonous, for it contained little else than a dream, possibly symbolic, relating to Florence and yourself; which dream, whether significant or non-significant, occurred on Sunday morning. Such advantage, therefore, as belongs to callowness or freshness this dream had. On the other hand, it was dull, not offering variety enough. However, a dulness that forewarns you forearms you, so that after all I send it.

In all the Edinburgh newspapers, nine or ten in succession, has appeared a notification that might have puzzled you had

you chanced to stumble on it—viz., *Miss Florence and Miss Emily de Quincey, Lasswade*, £1, 1s. amongst the subscriptions to the Patriotic Fund. It was I that sent this little offering, my motive being this, that for a special reason I could not myself subscribe, or fancied so. Yet it seemed almost disgraceful that no expression, small or great, of sympathy with so national a cause should appear on behalf of our Mavis Bush fireside; and therefore I forced myself to fork out a guinea. This sacrifice cost me a pang, even the extra shilling I wanted dismally. Yet, after all, on the Scriptural canon, I really *have* my reward. I took out this reward in sheer ostentation; for, being fully determined that not only my left hand should know what my right hand had been doing, but also that my left foot should know it, in case the said foot would oblige me by listening, I drew up the entry loaded with a double Christian name, which forced the printers (as I meant it should) to double round, thus—

Miss Florence and Miss Emily de Quincey,
Lasswade, ... £1 1 0

so as to clear out a wide space of blank paper as a foil or relief to the black emblazonry of the donation. It happened also that the very next in succession on the roll of contributors (a scamp who had the presumption to give only nine shillings) came hopping along with some name as short as *Bob*. Of course, if he would not belie and mystify his own identity to his whole circle of friends, he durst not prolong himself into *Robertus*. Consequently, he furnished what seemed a commensurate pedestal or basis to Mavis Bush folk riding overhead. This arrangement ran along through ten successive days, so long Florence and you rode upon the shoulders of Mr. Bob. At the end of that time, having collected—but observe, from Edinburgh, Leith, and circumjacencies—within forty shillings of sixteen thousand seven hundred pounds, the committee made a general recapitulation or *résumé* of the whole army of subscribers, which threw all into a different arrangement. This was published last Saturday in the "North British Advertiser" as a supplementary sheet; and I, in order that you might hereafter have a printed voucher by way of reply to all slanderers, bought a copy, lying here at your service. Give my best love to our dear cousins the Gees. I was most unwilling to seem, by any word or hint, to hurry you, knowing how pleasant

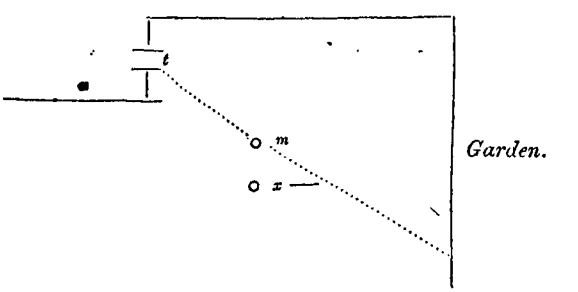
would be a Christmas spent with *them*. But still I am becoming most anxious about home. I fancy that perhaps the Gees think much as *I* do about the Crimean War. Here is my creed: tell me, how far they dissent:—viz., that, however managed, it is nearly hopeless. Not as though we might not take Sebastopol; I rather believe we shall. But what final good will *that* attain? All that we *can* effect, it seems to me, are these three objects—(*a*) to establish a permanent nautical control over the Black Sea and (*b*) over the Danube. These two objects *without* a treaty, simply by gunboats and by three-deckers and Lancaster guns, will united with the local resources of the Sultan, might *forcibly* effect. As to γ (*gamma*), the traitorous combustibles, the Christian population in the intestines of Turkey, and δ (*delta*) the two Principalities, we might perhaps gag them forcibly on some system concerted with Turkey; if not, are those objects indispensable? The great difficulty seems to lie in this, that Russia has no *heel of Achilles:* she is mortal nowhere. Meantime the Euxine and the Danube would be great jewels to win from her. And even as to the other points, where we *may* fail, and supposing also that we *should* fail, it is well to remember—as a profitable consolation—that hereafter against Communists and Red Republicans we shall need to invoke the aid of Russia, and to *rejoice* that she is strong.

P.S.—I have just sprung a mine of envelopes, consequently shall write away until the mine is exhausted.

The Dream.

This morning, being *Sunday*, a word unknown and unintelligible in this moorland, being in the native jargon, not unfamiliar, the *Sawbath*,—the hour (I should guess) 6 A.M., I had a dream, which dream was this. A door opened; it was a door on the *further* side of a spacious chamber. For a few moments I waited expectingly, but not knowing *what* to expect. At length a voice said audibly and most distinctly, but not loudly, *Florence and Emily*, with the tone of one announcing an arrival. Soon after, but not immediately, entered Florence, but, to my great astonishment, no Emily. Florence wore a dress not as if coming off a journey, at least not a travelling dress, but a simple walking dress; she had on a bonnet, rather a pretty one, but I should doubt if it had cost more than half-a-guinea

(unless they charge high in dreams); and it was lined with rose-coloured silk; but the ribbons, I think, were white (is *that* allowable?); and certainly the prevailing hue of the general dress was white. Florence did not look back; and how she accounted for Emily's not following is best known to herself. A shadow fell upon me, and a feeling of sadness, which increased continually as no Emily entered at the door, which, however, still stood open; so, you know, there was nothing to hinder her coming after all, if it was that she had only been loitering. But it relieved my feeling of sadness that Florence, of whose features I had the steadiest view, seemed cheerful, though not smiling. I felt it strange that I could not question her, notwithstanding that obliquely she was continually nearing my position. If I could catch her eye I felt that I could speak to her—not else; and this I could not do. What Florence was making for must have been a garden, still, solitary, and rich to excess with flowers past all counting, and gayer than any I had ever seen. The garden was on my right hand; the positions, in fact, were these :—



T is the door of entrance; *M* is Florence; *X* is myself in an unphilosophic mood of irritation, and, I fear, likely soon to become waspish if I should not succeed in arresting Florence's eye. However, I did *not* succeed; neither did Emily come so long as I staid, which might be six to eight minutes. Suddenly all vanished; the door, the garden, Florence, myself, all were gone; and I was broad awake, with no chance of ever intercepting the obstinate and unfilial Florence on her diagonal route to the flower-garden. I should mention, in order to complete the sketch, that although Florence continually advanced in the

sense of widening her distance from the entrance-door, nevertheless she never came nearer to me, for the chamber floor expanded concurrently with her steps, which is an awkward thing, you know, when walking a match against time. The garden, I should add, *melted* into the chamber, through steps of transition that were indescribable.

Had anything special occurred to fix my attention upon your name? Why, yes; on the night before (Saturday, January 6, 1855) a man had sent me, as a book that might amuse me, a novel in three vols., 2d edition, 1846, entitled *The Lawyers in Love; or, Passages from the Life of a Chancery Barrister.* It is a most absurd and extravagant tale, but showing that kind of talent which belongs to the construction of a pantomime; and in this tale one of the heroines is called *Florence.*

Here is, on the whole, a hopeful letter from a septuagenarian sick-bed:—

No. 42 Lothian Street,
Tuesday Evening, January 16, 1855.

My Dear Flor.-Em.,—Your—that is, Fl.'s—letter, startling me with the news of your return to Lasswade, not from the Orient but from the Occident, reached me yesterday morning, viz., Monday, January 15. I then was, and now am, lying sick in bed, and from some malady as violent as it was sudden. On Saturday afternoon this malady came on with sudden sickness, fever, and light-headedness; for thirty-six hours I was very ill indeed. But at length my continued abstinence through three full days—during which time not two ounces have passed my lips—is beginning to tell, as no doubt it always will, upon fever. Which malady, I beg to say, was no growth of my own crazy system; apparently it *could* not b since at the same hour of Saturday afternoon when *I* wa attacked, two gentlemen students, fellow-lodgers in this hou from the South, were attacked with equal violence, and one (if not both) took to the resource of bed; and secondly, he invoked medical aid; which I did *not.* All of us, I believe, are mending. Me, however, the fever, which was violent, has left so weak, that yesterday and to-day, on attempting to rise, I could not stand. But strength soon rekindles when the turn sets in; and so, perhaps, on Friday I may be over.

Before he has well recovered, he is equal to prescribing for the relief of others:—

Friday, February 9, 1855.

My Dear Florence,—I heard with great concern from Ellen on (was it not?) Friday evening last—*i.e.*, this day week—of your toothache sufferings. Every day I have been on the point of writing to you about the remedy; and I reproach myself heavily for having suffered my own miserable want of energy to interfere with the *instant* suggestion of so much practical counsel as my own bitter experience enables me to offer. This counsel divides into three sections—A, B, C. A relates to the *cause* of toothache. I pass to B and C. B indicates what relates to *clothing*. Warm coverings for the feet (lamb's wool fleecy hosiery, &c.), and above all, for the chest and shoulders, are indispensable; and therefore, if from any cause you are not immediately in possession of the right kind, I will buy whatever you direct me, pay for them, and forward them at once to Lasswade. Have you and Emily muffs and fur tippets? C stands for *diet*. Now, I remember most distinctly a long course of atrocious wretchedness from a fit of toothache that never intermitted night or day through nearly three weeks, and, behold! suddenly within two minutes, as if the angel of Bethesda had cried *halt!* it gave way, fled, vanished, and did not return through half a year, simply under the accident of a dinner more stimulant than usual. From dreadful ignorance—ignorance that was bovine, canine, bestial—I had been systematically feeding and nursing this accursed torment, under the fatal conceit that I was starving it, by a low vegetable diet. Fortunately, I had at length become infuriated by ill success. I resolved on trying the opposite system; and, by mere chance, on this day there happened to have been dressed for dinner a superb sirloin of beef. This I supported by a bottle of old port, and, as I am a living man, not one full glass had I drunk (simultaneously eating a square inch, not a *cubic* inch, of beef, and its reasonable proportion of gravy), when the foul fiend of toothache flapped his gloomy wings, and, like a gorged vulture, rose heavily, vanished, and for six months did not return. Now, comparing the three weeks' unrelenting prosecution with the absolutely instantaneous flight of the monster, you will hardly feel a doubt but that this mere

hint of a generous diet, falling on a system that by previous starvation had been disqualified for offering any resistance to a strong impulse, must have been the magic that worked the sudden revolution. "Take up thy bed and walk!" was the summons, that would not be refused, of this memorable dinner. Not for vain carnal amusement do I rehearse this instructive fact, but for thy practical conversion, O daughter of lukewarm faith! Promise me that, if I send out a bottle of the oldest port, you will order for dinner a sirloin of beef (roasted), and will drink at the said dinner two glasses of the wine, undiluted; or, if a little diluted, not to reckon the water as part of the two glasses.

I am in deadly depression of nervousness; spite of which, however, I meditate great exertions; and (with the benefit of a daily nine or ten miles' exercise) I believe that I could accomplish my plans. Towards these it is important for me to return home; and in the course of next week without fail I will do so. Meantime a wonderful sally of ingenuity has suggested to me that, by means of a previous concert between us, my return might be made available for a visit on *your* part to Edinburgh. You might come in by means of Cuthbert's carriage, for which, of course, I will pay, and take me up with my small quantum of baggage at *any* hour that suited you; *i.e.*, any hour from one to six. But let me know forty-eight hours before taking any final step in the matter. If one of the Miss Widnells should chance to find any motive for coming in on the same day, it would be easy for me to make room by taking my seat on a box of papers.

Do not suppose that my delays in returning argue any uncertainty of plans. The plain reason is simply my immeasurable incapacity for business—above all, for that sort of business which lies in arranging papers or packing up books. However, if you or Emily will concert some scheme, I, on *my* part, will really make an effort.

I have suffered much from my eyes since the influenza: some days all but blind, and on some nights roused up for hours by the pain, and still more by the nervous uneasiness besieging them. Sulphate of zinc is all the remedy I have applied.

Send my love to little Eva three times a week. Good night!—Ever affectionately yours.

Before he returns home he has set his heart on a "treat" for his daughters. The trouble he takes that his good intentions may not be frustrated is surely very commendable :—

This page was written on Thursday night, agreeably to the date; but all the rest is only *now* going to be written, viz., on this day, Friday, the 16th, hour 15 min. after 12. So I know not when you will get it.

Thursday Night, February 15, 1855.

My Dear Florence,—Last night I wrote a line to you; in fact, a line was all I *could* write; for on Mr. Hogg's coming in and thus offering me the advantage of a safe transmission to the Post-office, I could not without incivility do more than write a hurried close, which I mention in order to account for its abruptness. On closing it, I said to Mr. Hogg, now, this letter of mine, I feel certain, will cross one from my daughter. And so it did. About eight o'clock this morning your answer to mine of Friday last reached me. As to the day of my return, as you leave that arrangement open to my choice, most likely it will be Tuesday. Meantime I write to mention that on two separate days of next week Julien (or is it Jullien?) gives concerts. I am anxious that you and Emily should come over to one of the two. The tickets for us three, being 3s. 6d. each, will cost half-a-guinea; and Cuthbert's carriage to carry us in and back, I have an indistinct remembrance, will cost about 16s.—at all events, not more than 20s. The whole, therefore, will at the outside—toll-bar included—not cost more than a guinea and a half, which I will pay, and without incurring any debt to Mr. Cuthbert. But early applications are needed for the tickets. So pray return an answer as soon as possible as to these two points: *First*, Will you come? Is there any known [illegible]drance at this moment, or likely to be at the time? *Secondly*, [illegible] not, which of the two days advertised will suit you best? The days are immediately consecutive—viz., Wednesday the 21st of February, and Thursday the 22d. For which shall I get the tickets? There is always great crowding at these concerts, which (as you know) wear a vulgar, snobbish character, but always offer the attractions of a severely-selected and severely-trained orchestra, and *partially* of good music. And

on this particular occasion there is the *extra* (and, to you and Em., I should think inestimable), attraction of Mme. Pleyell, the celestial pianofortist. Heaven nor earth has yet heard her equal. So say the London amateurs. As to myself, you know that I have had no opportunity of hearing her. It seems also that the orchestral accompaniment to her performance is to be unusually rich and full. Certainly to be hustled by a gang of snobs would be a hideous drawback; but *us*, as nobs, viz., as occupying reserved seats, this overcrowding will hardly affect. I guess also, but doubtingly, that we shall have a moon. I have no doubt that one must be due about that time; but what I doubt is, whether she will not be too young to be available. Half-past ten to half-past twelve is about the time when she might be serviceable, if she could make it convenient. But in the infancy of the moon she goes to bed too soon, I fear, for *that*. Let me have your answer, if you can, by Monday. But do not send it over to Lasswade specially, at least by Ellen, for I gathered from her that at present you have but her in the house; and it is rather alarming to think of you two being left alone in a house so pestered with beggars, tramps, and outcasts, whom desperate poverty tempts always to robbery, and tempts successfully when opportunity favours. O heavens! what a long, prosy sentence! I repent it, deeply repent; but amendment, or amends, must be impossible unless by rewriting the whole letter. And in that case what becomes of the post?

On Tuesday last I saw announced the death of Miss Wordsworth at the age of eighty-four. You would, of course, see the death of Miss Mitford. I was sincerely grieved. For the last fortnight an unfeeling paragraph has also been circling round the newspapers, started (it is *said*) by the "Leader," that Miss Martineau's life hangs upon a gossamer—*enlargement of the heart* is her complaint, and at any moment it may be fatal. Yet I remember that ten years ago all the world believed her to be dying of cancer at Gateshead, spite of which she drank tea with us seven or eight years later; and it is odd that but a month ago she was lecturing all round the Lakes. Through one or other interruption it is now half-past six. So I am forced to conclude. —Yours most affectionately.

Par parenthèse, let us remark how pleasant it is to see that Miss Martineau felt herself called upon so

late as the year 1852 to turn out of the beaten track to visit De Quincey at Lasswade, as finding some capital attraction in the man and his talk. She thus, in view of more than one thing, showed, in the words of Isaiah, "the liberal heart devising *liberal things.*"

Wednesday Afternoon, February 21, 1855.

My Dear Girls,—I write a single line for the purpose of relieving you from any perplexity as to our place of *rendezvous.* Almost to a certainty I shall join you at Mavis Bush, either (which is possible) at breakfast, or (which is probable) about noon, on Thursday, the 22d of this current month. No opening for mistake, or for what the Scotch call *dubiety,* lurks to my thinking in those words. It is, however, conceivable, and therefore in a shadowy sense possible, but far indeed from probable, that I might be so retarded as to make it ineligible to set out on a toilsome walk through snow. Snow on the ground, and perhaps lying in drifts locally, would make it hard for me, not acquainted with the present condition of the roads, on the *cis* and the *trans,* the hither and thither side of the weathershed between Lasswade and Edinburgh, to know how much time to allow for driving; so that it is difficult on the whole for *me* to calculate so nicely as *you* may do on your side of the difficulty. If a snowstorm should come on and bar your return, I can, of course, easily procure bedrooms for our party in a Princes Street hotel.

In the following he finds himself unexpectedly precipitated on a minor point of casuistry:—

Saturday Night, March 3, 1855.

My Dear Daughters,—I was disturbed last night at finding no natural or spontaneous opening (how barbarous, by the way, is this collision of *ings*—finding, opening!) for any private communication. But, consistently with good breeding, how *could* one introduce such a parenthesis into the public current of one's talk? Private and confidential memoranda it would be dishonourable for a stranger to overhear. Consequently, it would [redacted] the point of politeness to co-operate with the strai[redacted]rts to *un-hear*—to *dis-hear*—to *non-hear* (how all I express it?)—every syllable and fragment of susurration

that might, though insulated, betray the tendency * of our colloquy. But, if such be the *set* or secret direction of the true politeness, then, saith the ferocious casuist, the *acmé* and tip-top attitude of politeness must lie in whispering. Yet, on the other hand, can anything be more vitally impolite than whispering in company? So that the extremity of politeness actually terminates and eventuates in the very excess of rudeness; and here, as in so many other cases, the philosophic axiom is realised—that *extremes meet.*

But metaphysically to account for the incommunicability, and to show that the accident of last night in George Square was no accident, but the inseparable necessity of the situation, does that indemnify me? Healeth that my wound? Doth *that* apply a plaister to my burning, smarting fury? I trow *not.* What I wanted to confer upon was *inter alia* (which, being interpreted, signifieth *amongst divers otherments*) as to the Music Hall temptation, viz., Mendelssohn's "St Paul," on the morning of this day, Saturday the 3d of March, which then figured for a moment in the character of to-morrow. I wished to know whether, reading its newspaper promises by the light of our own recent experience on Thursday the 22d of February, we could flatter ourselves that the pleasure would at all answer to the cost. Left to myself on this Saturday morning at six o'clock, for so early had I sate (or, more correctly, *sitten*) up perpendicularly in bed looking and listening for the newspaper embodying the last telegraphic (1) details, or (2) rumours, or (3) guesses, or (4) jibs about the poor assassinated Czar; which newspaper (heretofore coming, even in deepest January, duly and Scoticé *pointedly* † at half-past six) now, of course, under the eternal disturbance (oftentimes the *inversion*) of the equities, proportions, reasonable expectations attached to life, did not come until an hour later; left, therefore, to my solitary meditations at an hour when all the street slumbered, I speculated in vision upon the question whether my poor crazy energies could so far rally as to rise, shave, dress, walk over to George's Square about eleven A.M., and with you two concert some plan for procuring tickets, and finally at half-past one presenting these tickets to the anarchs and lords of misrule who pretend to

* [——cy of the ——quy] what dreadful jingl[redacted]s!

† *Pointedly*, the current Scotch for *punctual* is *pointed*.

guide the confusion that for ever beclouds the avenues to the Music Hall. Much I fear that, had all been smooth sailing, my powers of combination for facing the several steps of the arrangement, as to tickets, carriage, rendezvousing personally, would have floored my drooping energies. But when I heard that a worse crush than on the 22d was pretty sure to be met by a system of police measures in no respect less reckless, I shrank hopelessly from the enterprise. This, therefore, is gone. As respects the future, however; at the theatre, the entrance and the exit are beset by less pressure and anxiety. So, if you see announced any performance of whatsoever class that to your fancy promises well, warn me in time; that is, supposing me to be *here*, which generally will not be the case. You must be dull, I am sure, in your imprisonment at Mavis Bush, where even the mavis, I believe, is a rare guest. Some studies meantime I could suggest, which, perhaps, we might pursue with advantage in partnership. Which be they? Why grammar, universal grammar (as it is termed), as treated, for instance, by Harris in his "*Hermes*."

The following, which is characteristic in its own way, was written to Miss Agnes Duncan, a neighbour of his sister at Bath, who had sometime before paid a visit to Mavis Bush :—

March 5, 1855.

My Dear Miss Agnes,—Florence is writing to you, and *that* ripens a purpose which I had to revive my two days' acquaintance with you by endeavouring to interest you in my immediate literary plans. All the people that ever I cared about in this world I wished to interest in anything I was meditating of [redacted]is sort. But why? Was my vanity so vivacious? Oh no, vanity or egotism had nothing to do with it. From the conversation of every human being I know at once whether it is possible for that person, so and so constituted, to care much about this [redacted] that thing which I may have written. Yourself I recognised [redacted]ne of those who would feel an interest in my 'Autobiog[redacted]ic Sketches." And suddenly, whilst I was supposing myself [redacted]have perhaps dreamed all *that*, came your letter, recording the trouble which you must have had in searching up

those old *paper-asses* through long since defunct magazines. How can there be any vanity after *that* in my reporting a far smoother route by which you will reach the same object, much improved, and also very much enlarged. Really I begin to feel as if in this last sentence I were writing a puff for the newspapers. But, on the other hand, this is an evil that besets every communication that ever *was* or *will* be meant to recommend any plan whatsoever, small or great. I for my part am satisfied if I interest a sufficient number of readers for the present to carry off the edition. Hereafter I will endeavour to establish a deeper attraction.

Meantime, I wish to inform you that chapters altogether new will be introduced among the sections of this forthcoming volume. And secondly, as your kindness may lead you to ask how soon the volume will be finished, I beg to explain that it moves at such a rate as to imply about a month further of progress. A most whimsical difficulty retards me, which possibly I mentioned to you—viz., that it is easier for me to write a letter from Edinburgh to Astrachan, than from Lasswade to Edinburgh. In the former case you point a gun levelled directly at the object; but in the latter you shoot round a corner. To reach Lasswade, even for *us*, having only two servants, is a process accomplished sometimes through a two days' journey. Such a labourer gives the letter to such a farmer; unless, indeed, when some nondescript animal happens to call that way, goes all the way to Lasswade. Such nondescript is reported to me at this moment. Pray allow for my necessity, and ever believe me, my dear Miss Agnes, faithfully yours,

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

The next letter will perhaps justify the position accorded to it by the testimony it bears to his thoughtful concern for any one in difficulties, or merely lonely [illegible] reason of being in a strange place :—

Monday, Ma[illegible]h, 1855.

MY DEAR EMILY,—What am I staying here fo[illegible] chiefly and originally for the papers with which to finish [illegible] "Suspiria." One of the most important papers, viz., "The Dau[illegible]er of Lebanon," is not (as I thought it *had* been) in this last parcel. I am

puzzled how to proceed. Meantime, I am and *have* been for three or four weeks suffering greatly from the aching of my left arm, —intermitting, one might call it, and yet it rarely slumbers altogether; but it fluctuates, and at times it taxes my powers of endurance most heavily. I have an anodyne lotion for rubbing it, and this gives some relief, but not such as can be always relied on.

The result of all these elements co-operating for annoyance is, that I am perplexed, and even distracted, and on Wednesday or Thursday I think of coming home. I am, however, desirous to ask of you and Flor to come over some day according to your own convenience, for the purpose of calling on a young lady from Wales, a Miss M——, sister to a student at the College. She has come hither, viz., to these lodgings, with her brother, who had gone about a month since to fetch her. They returned after a fortnight's interval, and they seem lonely enough. She is musical, and appears amiable. If you see no objection, it would be kind to take a little notice of her. Perhaps in some way you could combine the use of Cuthbert's brougham (I paying, of course) with some plan for calling here. Or perhaps better to wait till I see you.

I am horrified at the course which the democratic movement is taking. The great meeting or meetings of Saturday in London must, if issuing in *any* practical expression, explode in consequences fearfully revolutionary.

The next letter, bearing date May 1855, exhibits his relations to the domestic animals, and his sympathy for them in their sufferings:—

My Dear Miss Craig,—I will make a new beginning. But why so? Simply for the reason that follows. There is in this house, 42 Lothian Street, a being (metaphysically speaking, I must not call him a *person*) who is not altogether a friend of mine, but far less an enemy, because systematically I extend toleration to all Jews, Cretans (though charged with lying), dwellers in Mesopotamia, Mahometans, Pagans, even to donkeys (provided they retire for the purpose of braying into a secluded study); [redacted], to all the world, except only atrocious duns convicted of a fourth offence, and obstinate performers on the bagpipes. Therefore, of course, I tolerate cats, of which race is the

agent concerned in what I am going to report; for surely a cat stands far within the comprehensive circle of indulgence that I have traced. A few weeks ago, I had a severe attack of influenza, which has obliged me ever since to lie down for an hour or two in the middle of the day. Naturally, in these circumstances, I sometimes doze a little. Waking suddenly from such a momentary lull, I became aware of a little drama in the very crisis of *cat*astrophe. My letter to yourself lay extended on the breakfast tablecloth, close to it was a cream jug, and close to *that* a newly-opened bottle of Tarling's metallic ink, and quietly reconnoitring his opportunities was the feline pet of the house, who is also the sole criminal and traitor of the house. My movement in waking must have alarmed him,—conscience made a coward of him, and off he bounced, upsetting—not the cream jug, which had been the secret magnet of his invasion—but Mr. Tarling's sixpenny-worth of chemistry. So much of the black deluge lodged upon the right-hand section of your letter as obliged me to condemn it for illegible; else it was all written clearly enough. The deluge extended to the extremities of several remote slips, so that you may chance to find memorials of the wretch's transgression weeks ahead in future letters.

Kant asks somewhat sneeringly, whether, as the poor horse shares so largely in human miseries, it had happened to the paradisaical horse that he had eaten any *forbidden hay*. I do not know, but certainly the cats of this terraqueous earth in all generations, from paradise downwards, *have* eaten, and even at at this moment *are* eating, a monstrous quantity of forbidden cream. Yet, as regards any counter-reckoning or penal retribution on the part of man, ten thousand times over (to *my* thinking) the balance is adjusted, and the account squared, by the infamous cruelties of which man has tolerated the infliction upon cat. The household Ishmaelite is certainly the cat by means of its opportunities; but, on the other hand, through its weakness, and the ubiquity of its presence, a cat offers itself to the first impulse or craving of devilish malignity in a cruel boy's heart,—and I am sure that the groans and screams of this poor persecuted race, if gathered into some great echoing hall of horrors, would melt the hearts of the stoniest of our race.

The next note will show how he had to undergo the usual ordeals by which the patience of popular authors

is sorely tried—requests for copies of their books *gratis*:—

42 LOTHIAN STREET,
Thursday, May 10, 1855.

MY DEAR FLOR,—This morning as early as seven, or some few minutes later, I received your letter, and also the three accompanying communications—one being from Mr. Lushington in Kent; one from some unknown (and, so far as I have yet penetrated, *nameless*) society in N. America upon international copyright; and thirdly, one from the librarian of some Manchester suburban institution, transmitting their honorary salutations; but not, as we usually incarnate such expressions of homage or of courtesy, viz., in a gold box. No; such is the increasing wickedness amongst this generation of vipers—absolutely *inverting* the old traditionary usage, and looking to me, of all people, for the gold box. Not they to me, but I to them, am to remit the gold box; such at least is the *virtual* reading of the case according to my way of spelling. The *letter* of their statement is this, that, being poverty-bitten, the society cannot fulfil the wish of their hearts, which points magnetically towards the purchase of my four darling volumes, but in default of that purchase are compelled to act upon the suggestion of a promising young member, who, after intense study, fell upon the discovery that I, by the happy privilege of my position, might pluck the four volumes as so many grape clusters from a vine, or, more truly (in relation to the money cost), as so many blackberries from a bramble. One is amused with the soft velvety coercion of these gentle beggars; and of course I can no less than send the volumes as a peppercorn rent for the liging incense of flattery with which they fumigate my ostrils.

The next letter we shall give points to one of the changes by which the Mavis Bush household was scattered:—

Memoran[illegible] *not sent until August* 1. Second memorandum, not sent til[illegible] gust 2.

Tuesday Night, July 31, 1855.

My Dear Daughters,—On Friday penultimate (*i.e.*, Friday last but one), being the 20th of July, I received *your* (meaning Emily's) letter, that letter which spoke of the wedding at some distance from Boston, where the Misses Gee had "assisted." It seems strange that this same wedding, between parties as yet unknown to me even by name, has already reached me through another channel. Four or five weeks ago, I met in the course of my ordinary walk along the Queensferry Road a party of gentlemen who challenged me as an acquaintance. I recognised no one of them; but it turned out to be Messrs. John Blackwood the publisher and James B. the lawyer. Some confused remembrance I had that we were or ought to be in a relation of hostility, though *why* I could ground upon none but fuscous and cloudy reasons. However, as it occurred to me that the belligerent party had never ceased to send me the monthly present of his magazine, naturally the war could not have been conducted in a spirit of *acharnement*. Surprised, however, I was a little at the marked kindness of their salutation, and I heard with pleasure that Mr. John B., who (as by accident I knew) had sometime ago married a young lady (and indistinctly my impression was an Englishwoman), wished to introduce his young wife to Florence and yourself, and proposed accordingly to drive her over to Mavis Bush on any day that should be convenient to you two. Of course, I expressed my own pleasure, and answered for yours, at this prospect, but explained the hindrance which for the present would delay the meeting. Some weeks after this, viz., on Saturday night, July 21, I met on the same road partially the same party: again there were two Blackwoods, only for James the lawyer was substituted Major Blackwood; but again Mr. John was present, and as it happened to be nearly nine o'clock would peremptorily insist upon my going *instanter* to drink te with Mrs. J. B. I did so, and found her a very fascinatin person as regards manners. She has a charming frankness, and a most winning spirit of kindness in her address. During the hour that I had the pleasure of passing in her company, which was sincerely a *very* pleasant one (for Mrs. [redacted] is constitutionally cheerful and I believe clever), it can[redacted] some recent marriage in Boston had personally interes[redacted]stess. Could I be right in fancying that the name of *Waugh* was in

some way associated with the event?. Such an impression survived faintly from the remembrances of the evening. We both came to the conclusion that this must be identical with *your* wedding, since (said Mrs. B.) it would be likely to engage the interest of the Miss Gees.

Last week, viz., on Thursday the 26th of July, I dined by invitation with a small party—*men* only—at Mr. Ritchie's in George Square. Mr. Ritchie * and his family have been very kind in their attentions to me. But, to finish my story of the dinner-party,—on entering the drawing-room, inquiries buzzed about me as to your whereabouts and intentions with regard to the homeward route, &c.; and upon my answering that I had reason to look for you (speaking nautically) "*in all August*," somebody said, "We understand, Mr. de Quincey, you are going to lose another of your daughters." This arose naturally out of a previous inquiry about M. and the chances of her coming over to England; but it took me so far by surprise that I did not know how to treat it, for I was not certain as to F.'s own wishes on this point. However, I said, smiling, that such a rumour was certainly current. "Aye, but it's more than a rumour," said Mr. Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman;* and then it came out that on the morning of this very Thursday, a son of Lord Dunfermline's, one of the Abercrombies, who is now by accident on a visit to Edinburgh, had announced the news as highly probable. He is our British Minister at Turin; and it had so happened, that when Colonel Baird Smith was studying the system of irrigation in the King of Sardinia's Continental dominions (Piedmont, &c.), he was invited to take up his quarters in the hotel of our English Legation, which he did, and thus became intimately acquainted with Sir Ralph, for I believe that this son of Lord D.'s is the one known as Sir Ralph A. So that here is at once an end to all further secrecy, if you had any wish for it. On this occasion, by the way, as previously at Mr. J. B.'s, I found all persons loud in the praise of Colonel Baird Smith.

This day, viz., August 1, *now* at p. 6 (though not on p. 1), I was meaning to transfer myself to Mavis Bush. But so far I have altered my purpose as that I shall not go till to-morrow. But I plan [illegible]lishly; for my spirits fail me, and, since

* John Ritchie was proprietor of the *Scotsman*.—Ed.

I wrote last, through one fortnight I was fearfully ill. To-morrow I will write specially to Florence.—Ever, my dear daughters,—with love to the two ladies your hostesses.

P.S.—Have I understood you rightly that dear little Eva is coming over?

In 1855 his second daughter, Florence, went out to India and was married to Colonel Baird Smith, so well known in connection with great engineering works there. And not only distinguished for his achievements in civil engineering. As Sir John Kaye tells,* he was transferred from Roorkhee to Delhi at an early period of the siege as engineer chief; he projected the plan of assault, urged it on in opposition to General Sir Archdale Wilson's wishes for delay, and after being wounded and weakened, so that recourse to opium was forced upon him for support, he remained the responsible director of the siege operations till final success was secured. This further inroad on the household at Lasswade, only seemed to render De Quincey more concerned for the welfare of all. The next extract will show the impression that the first personal acquaintance with his grandchild Eva produced upon him:—

42 Lothian Street,
October, 1855.

My Dear Emily,—Do you know, I cannot abide "Dred," so much, at least, as I have read of "Dred," which, thank heaven, is not much. Also, I cannot abide Mr. Aytoun's "Bothwell," so much, at least, as I have seen of it, which, thank heaven, is considerably less.

Did I tell you what word it was that dear little Eva suggested to me? I was thinking, months ago, what words we English could muster towards balancing the French claim (claim of wealth, I mean, in the vocabulary) *cial* distinc-

* History of the Sepoy War. Vols. ii. and iii.

tions). *Ennui*, upon which the French are so *fiers*, might imperfectly (I thought) be represented by *listlessness*. Here seems the difference:—Listlessness is, perhaps, a purely *passive* state—a mere *effect* or *result;* whereas, *ennui* has something *causative* about it. Ennui might prompt or suggest, but perhaps listlessness only forbears to oppose. So as to some other words. At last I came to Eva's word, which was *arch* and *archness*. She is the only baby of twelve months old that ever struck me as *arch*. There seems to be between this word *archness* and the justly famous French word *naiveté*, a connecting link of apposition. *Naiveté*, or naturalness, or natural spontaneity, always involves *unconsciousness*. But *archness* is thus far opposed, that it includes, necessarily, a certain amount of *conscious* fun.

In the next letter, addressed to his daughter Emily, he gives at length his opinion on the final form of the "Confessions," inviting, as was his wont, the deliberate and independent opinion of his daughters on the subject:—

This was parboiled in departing September; parboiled in opening October. But, as involving no *personal* limitation to this correspondent or to that, why not transfer it to you? Tuesday and pretty certainly Wednesday being the *last* day of September and *first* of October. *Tear* continuing very much what it was when I wrote last.

My Dear Emily,—By this complex date I wish you to understand that my epistolary impulses may happen to cruise about throughout the week, weighing anchor whenever the whim seizes me, and dropping anchor as often as I am riously interrupted. Hold me excused, therefore, from all ntinuity or logical coherency. All the reason that I can plead r beginning is that the day happens to be September 30; so at, if I do not write now, you will say I have not written is autumn; since many critical people insist upon ranking October as a winter month. Yet stop! did not I write early in September? So absorbed am I by the press, that I forget all nd I forget that—did I write, or did I not? V he point of closing, viz., "The Confessions." itten; and there cannot be much doubt that

here and there it is enlivened, and so far improved. To justify the enormous labour it has cost me, most certainly it *ought* to be improved. And yet, reviewing the volume as a *whole*, now that I can look back from nearly the end to the beginning, greatly I doubt whether many readers will not prefer it in its original fragmentary state to its present full-blown development. But if so, why could I not have felt this objection many weeks since, when it would have come in time to save me what has proved an exhausting labour. The truth is, I *did* feel it; but what countervailed that objection was secretly the following awkward dilemma:—A doubt had arisen whether, with my own horrible recoil from the labour of converging and unpacking all hoards of MSS., I could count upon bringing together enough of the "Suspiria" (yet unpublished) materially to enlarge the volume. If not, this volume (standing amongst sister volumes of 320 to 360 pp.) would present only a beggarly amount of 120 pp. Upon which arose this dilemma—Either the volume must be strengthened by the addition of papers altogether alien, which to me was eminently disagreeable, as breaking up the unity of the volume—or else, if left in the slenderness of figure, would really to *my* feeling involve us in an act that looked very like swindling. How could 7s. 6d. be reasonably charged to the public for what obviously was but a third part in bulk of the other volumes? But could not the price for this anomalous volume have been commensurately lessened? No. Mr. H., the publisher, who knows, of course, so much more than I do about such cases, assures me that nothing so much annoys the trade as any interruption of the price scale upon a series of volumes. Such being the case, no remedy remained but that I should *doctor* the book, and expand it into a portliness that might countenance its price. I should, however, be misleading you if any impression were left upon your mind that I had eked out the volume by any wire-drawing process: on the contrary, nothing has been added which did not originally belong to my outline of the work, having been left out chiefly through hurry at the period of first, original, publication in the autumn of 1821. Do not, therefore, suffer anything I have now said to interfere with reading the book in its recomposition (or, more boo[illegible]*ficimento*); for I wish to have the deliberate ju[illegible] of Pegsborough, since hereafter it will travel

edition, priced suppose one half-crown instead of three; and in that edition I can profit by the opinions reported. As a further reason for reading it I must mention, that as a book of *amusement* it is undoubtedly improved; what I doubt is, whether also as a book to *impress*. Some morning soon you will receive the book through the post-office; and after *that*, I will plague you no more about it. Meantime this one thing I may add, as guiding you to the notion that I have been fumbling with:—Pope, you know, originally published his "Rape of the Lock" as a mere aërial sketch unencumbered with any machinery; but afterwards (on better—some think on worse—consideration) he buckramed or crinolined his graceful sketch with an elaborate machinery of gnomes and sylphs derived from the Rosicrucian philosophy. This change stiffened it, but rounded it and made it orbicular. Was it better or worse for this somewhat pompous expansion? The opinion of the world was unhesitatingly that the new machinery was most felicitous; and in particular places, I cannot deny that it tells with great effect. Yet, after all, there was in the original sketchy and playful *bagatelle*, with its fragmentary grace and its *impromptu* loveliness, an attraction which has perished in the brocaded massiveness and voluminous draperies of this ceremonial mythology, with its regular manœuvrings and deployings of agencies malicious or benign. We now have a full-blown rose against the original wild rosebud or dewy blossom of the dawn. Such is *my* feeling. Such was Addison's, and I doubt not his most sincere feeling. Yet the friends of Pope affected to think that so very natural a mode of feeling was in Addison purely hypocritical, and hazarded under the desperate refinement of finessing jealousy—that Pope might be thus misled into suppressing his exquisite little gem of art under its most perfect manifestation. How thoroughly sincere Addison *might* be, I for *my* part read most legibly in my own continual vibration towards the same decision. But what relation has all this to my own case? Simply this—that here again, as in thousands of similar cases, is a conflict—is a call for a choice—between an almost *extempore* effort, having the faults, the carelessness, possibly the graces, of a fugitive inspiration—this on the one side [redacted] other a studied and mature presentation of the same thoughts, and feelings, but without the same benefit of [redacted] extraneous excitement. Waal, now, to speak

yankeeishly, I calculate your dander is rising against this specimen of dissertationising. But note, this is an exceptional epistle, preparing and warning you for a *practical* question, viz., a thoughtful consideration of the remodelled "Confessions" as more fit, or less fit, under omissions or changes (what and where?), to take its place among works addressing themselves to the *popular* mind. Such a purpose, you will admit, excuses a certain amount of lecturing. However, excusable or not, it is over. As Solomon remarks, the rain is over and gone; and the voice of the turtle, not turtle-soup, is heard in the forests. No more lecturing shall you hear from me. I proceed to ask—are you at all thinking of turning homewards? By the 20th of the next month, or say (as a day more memorable) by the 21st, which is the day of "almighty Trafalgar," I shall be ready to reinstate myself in our sumptuous mansion of Mavis Bush. When, on or about the 27th (I think it was) of July, I heard from you, not that you were going, but actually that you were going—going—GONE, to that island of saints, first gem of the sea, green Erin,—verily I was struck as by a thunderbolt.

But why, you will say, hearing of my "consternation" on learning so suddenly your departure for Ireland, had I ever quitted Mavis Bush? *Your* going away would not have necessitated mine. No; but I was satisfied that I never could have carried through the press a remodelled edition of "The Confessions" at that distance from the press; *here* I have done ill enough, followed with such hunter's speed by the printers, that a quantity of "copy," which I had been taught to suppose equal to twelve men's work for at least half a week, came back to me all finished in five hours. But what should I have done at Lasswade? Here, if I send a messenger back, it is but a few hundred steps that he has to retrace and lose. Every time t' same thing happened at Lasswade, there would have been a loss of fifteen miles.

You never tell me anything of Mr. John Craig, *junior*. But I fear *junior* does not reach the depth of the case; it must be *natu minimus*, youngest, not younger, that will hit the bird I mean. You must understand that the Latin adjective *juvenis* (young) has a comparative degree, *juvenior* (and [redacted]tion *junior*), younger. But very improperly it has [redacted]e, *juvenissimus*, and by contraction *junissimus*. [redacted]

wanting to these haughty Romans, but not the thing. A youngest member of a family, a younger than a younger, did exist in Roman households, in defiance of old mumbling grammar and old toothless grammarians that suddenly found themselves bankrupt of proper words for expressing "oldest" and "youngest." Once in my hearing a man, who could not carry into the understanding of a woman his very simple question, "Was the storey in which we stood the topmost in the whole house?" presented his question thus—"Supposing this house turned upside down, should we find ourselves in the cellar?" And so, as there is no proper Latin word for "youngest," except the circuitous one of *natu minimus*, and yet the young gentleman aimed at *is* known to me only as youngest or most young, and any merely *junior* person will not answer, then I desire to vary my question thus—Supposing all relations of age to be exactly inverted, and all modes of kinship turned upside down, then understand that I am inquiring about a young gentleman that would in that case become grandfather to a writer on "Political Economy" in three volumes octavo. That grandfather, aged, I believe, about two and a half months, has he come as yet to the use of his distinguishing faculties? Does he notice any slight differences between a philosopher and a cabbage? And on what terms is he with Miss Eva, who originally, I think, threatened to do for him?

There is some humour in the manner in which Thucydides figures in the next note in relation to a grandchild; and evidence of a resuscitation of old impulses in his venturing forth in spite of weakness to hear Grisi. But more important than either of these points is the concern that he feels for old friends:—

I am somewhat weary of Lothian Street. But should Lothian Street spitefully retort that she is weary of me, *that* happens to be impossible, as I can prove, for she has never seen me. At the end of the penultimate (not the ultimate) week of May 1856, did I, the underwritten, enter upon these Wilsonian rooms or room, out of which stirred have I not into any [redacted]etlet, once only excepted, three or four weeks back [redacted]t to the theatre for the purpose of seeing al[redacted]Grisi, and under the impression (which now

appears to have been a false impression) that on this planet she would not again be scenically revealed. I entered on this messuage at a time, say May 24, when as yet little Frank's starry head had not arisen by full two months above this world's horizon; two months, I think, and three days: is not that correct? Did little Frank's ear tingle a trifle to-night, I wonder? For, about seven o'clock, I was, though not talking about him, yet reading, or (as superfine ladies in low life are apt to say) I was '*perusing*,' a passage that related exclusively to *him*; and you know the proverb. But *where*, in what record, prophetic or historic, was it that I could find anything to read about Frank? Many books and papers there are lying distractedly up and down the room; but in one of two only could it be, as two and no more were, and are, on the tea-table, viz., Thucydides, and a young lady's letter, this night received; so that by mere coercion of logic, if not in the lady's letter, then Frank must have been mentioned in Thucydides; perhaps on the same page with Pericles, Alcibiades, and the ugly knave Socrates. On making further examination, I find that it was *not* Thucydides who took liberties with Frank Craig's name; not Thucydides to a certainty, but Miss ———. She (but unhappily for a curious posterity seeking vainly to solve the mystery—unhappily not in the broad open ocean of her letter, but in the narrow straits where cross currents and ripples—such as these—make the navigation trying and perilous to the best of pilots) speaks first of Eva as a lovely little thing, and then, but by a name looking more like *Hastie* than anything else, she forges off on the other tack to Frank. How Miss ——— came to write to me at all was thus:—Some five or six weeks back, whilst pursuing my studies in that impassioned journal, *The North British Advertiser*, I saw a notice from certain indeterminate Miss ——— (who *might* prove after all to be *our* Miss ——— you know), inviting all the world in search of artificial flowers to look for them in ——— Street, where the aforesaid Mesdemoiselles bivouacked. Could it be that our amiable young friends, who had sustained so many *jolts* at least of adversity, were reduced even yet lower, and were at last making an effort to earn their daily bread by manufacturing flowers? No, my h[redacted]tter; and, according to Sir Andrew Aguecheek's m[redacted] the case, my hope was that they were *not* getting th[redacted]

if, after all, it should turn out that they *were*, how mean a thing it would seem, that precisely with *their* descent should coincide an apparent neglect from us; for I, out of pure inadvertence, had delayed sending a copy of "The Confessions." This neglect I immediately caused to be repaired; and then, at his leisure, Mr. Hogg pushed inquiries in all directions, until he ascertained fully that between ——— Street and ——— Street was no connection. Meantime Miss ——— having, through a long period of suffering, been confined to bed, could not acknowledge the book; but to-night, being better, she does; and in that way it happens that to *her* was granted an opportunity, which to that benighted reprobate, Thucydides, was not, and at this time of day probably never will be granted, of enlarging upon the dawning beauty of my dear little grandson.

Nothing that was passing in the world without escaped him, or was without interest to him, as many little references must already have suggested. In all matters that moved the public feeling, awe-inspiring murder-trials not excepted, his interest was keen, and many of his letters communicate his ideas on *causes celebres*. The two following letters addressed to his daughter Emily present some of his theories on the notorious Palmer case:—

Wednesday, June 18, 1856.

My Dear Emily,—Odd it is that, just at the moment when I was looking for a pen, the clock then striking three P.M., in order to let you know that on or about Monday (it may be Tuesday) next, I was planning to come over for a week or ten days, your letter was delivered to me.

One thing I wish exceedingly, which is, that you would write to the "Captain" of the Manchester Grammar School, explaining that nothing but nervous unhappiness had hindered my long ago writing, and that at present I waited only for the finishing of the fifth vol. to send off the whole set. Do you remember the Captain's address? The name I think is Taylor.

As to l[redacted], and the question you put, I (like other people) am mo[redacted]xed as the case unfolds its unintelligibilities. Ne[redacted] moment have I doubted Palmer's guilt. And ant[redacted], manifestly desiring to benefit by a quibble, said, "Cooke

did not die" (or "was not poisoned") "by strychnia," I (like all others) held as a matter of certainty that the murderer and the mode of murder were equally manifested. Since Saturday last, however (when in second and third editions of the *Scotsman* and the *Express* I read telegraphic accounts of the execution), I have been shaken in that opinion. For manifestly Palmer, like many other obtuse and callous criminals, wished (and fancied it possible with advantage in two worlds), to equivocate and play the Jesuit with his own conscience. He fancied it possible to benefit in a ghostly world by adhering to the *literal* truth, whilst in the present world he benefitted by what was *virtually* a falsehood, conveying a false impression, but verbally might be true. "I did not kill (or did not poison) Cooke by strychnia." "But did you by any other poison?" To that question he refused any answer. Now if we suppose him prepared for general and unconditional mendacity, why should he have recoiled from that searching and comprehensive question? After this I felt myself compelled to hesitate about the strychnia. But in that case, you will say, what becomes of the remarkable evidence given by Newton, and the undeniable fact that he *surprised* Palmer in the very act of purchasing a large quantity of strychnia? We must suppose that the purchase, and generally the clandestine circumstances which surrounded the purchase, had been all prearranged for effect by Palmer, though this one incident of the surprise could not have been arranged. But with what purpose? Expressly with the purpose of misleading the public mind, and throwing it upon a false scent. Especially the *medical* public, he assured himself, would be so preoccupied with this belief, as to search singly for strychnia; yet, as they found none, on this issue he staked his own almost certain escape. Unfortunately for him, the external symptoms so strangely corresponded to those ascribed by repute (one can scarcely say *traditionally* ascribed) to strychnia, and secondly, those supposed confirmatory symptoms (the jerking of the arms, the screams, the arching of the body) so unhappily coincided with the hypothesis of Dr. Taylor as to the possible absorption (and in that way the disappearance) of the strychnia, that his own reliance on the apparent absence of the poison utterly failed him. In fact, the very *non*-appearance of the strychnia under Dr. [redacted] notions told *against* him. Under this view of the case, [redacted] remains as a most remarkable coincidence that Newton's *surprising* him,

the very thing he must have wished for, should really have occurred. "And yet, though a most singular coincidence, it is on the other hand equally unaccountable (or at least marvellous) on the counter view of the case—viz., that Palmer was seriously and *bona fide* purchasing strychnia for the purpose imputed to him. But as to Newton's evidence in particular I heard from a gentleman, formerly secretary to Canning when Prime Minister, a remarkable anecdote, derived immediately from L—— C———, on the night of Thursday last, June 12, which to-morrow I will tell you. At present the fiend is looking over my shoulder from the press of No. 18 St. Andrew's Square. To-day is Waterloo. Love to the Widnells.—Ever, my dear Emily, yours affectionately.

Thursday, June 26, 1856.

My Dear Emily,—My last letter, written (if I do not mistake) on this day week, should have had a successor treading on its heels. I had promised this expressly; and, secondly, an unfinished letter seems virtually to *imply* such a promise. What I had left unfinished was that part of Palmer's case which rested on the questionable conduct of Newton. This has been in some measure accounted for by the story reported (as I mentioned to you) to the ex-secretary of the late Mr. C—— I had it from *him*, the ex-secretary. He had it from ——, who would be most savage if I should call him *a* Colonel F. Thirdly, this Colonel F. (whether *a* or *the*) had it directly from ——, one of the three judges who presided at Palmer's trial. Perhaps you are aware that the difficulty besetting Newton's evidence was this—why had he kept it back for months, and come forward at last only on the very eve of the trial? It could not be alleged that for this conduct there existed any motive of interest apparent or conceivable, still it wore an air of mystery. But by Colonel F.'s story this was plausibly (or at least endurably) accounted for. Newton immediately after the trial took the step (in *his* case a proper one and a bold one if he knew his own intentions to have been upright) of personally waiting upon, and offering an explanation of his conduct. Accident had made him acquainted from the very first with the *second* purchase of strychnia by Palmer; and the previous purchase of course he knew, having himself been the seller. But this second purchase rather tended to disperse than to strengthen the suspicions against Palmer. In fact, the very

magnitude of the quantity—six grains, when barely half a grain rightly managed was a dose fatally sufficient for an adult—naturally turned his suspicions into a different channel—not any human being, but a *horse,* occurred to him as the probable object of Palmer's poisoning enterprise. We must all admit that in the case of Palmer (a man dedicated through life to horse-racing and systematic betting upon horses), this silent interpretation of the case by Newton was a most reasonable one. Oftentimes it happens, through the complex betting which takes place, that the winning of a race by one particular horse will make a difference to the people interested against him of very ruinous sums. A sudden and enormous temptation is thus created, sometimes within a single hour, by changes in the aspect of the chances, for "*nobbling*" the horse—such is the technical term; that is, for getting into his stable by tampering with one of his grooms, trainers, or perhaps his rider, and either killing him outright, or (where it is possible) disabling him for the coming trial. But is not this a scandalous roguery? Certainly it is, and in strict discharge of his duty Newton ought to have published his suspicions and their grounds, or at any rate, he should have made them known in the quarter likely to be specially affected by them. All this is true; but still it is easy to understand the excuse pleaded by Newton to Lord Campbell as natural and even entitled to considerable indulgence, viz., that he, as an old neighbour and acquaintance of Palmer's, could not reconcile himself to the idea of pointing the thunderbolt which must probably carry ruin simultaneously to his character and his fortune. This explanation to my thinking is natural and intelligible, and exhibits Newton in the venial light of a man whose principles were simply not very tightly braced, so that he listened to the claims of good nature rather than of severe justice.

To your remark that it would have been more satisfactory, however much the case was able to dispense with such a proof, nevertheless that a distinct proof should have been obtained of strychnia lurking in the organs (all or some) of poor, ill-fated Cook, I assent thus far, that I think the absence of such proof matter of deep regret; but I do not admit that such an absence, under the withering hailstorm of circumstantialities, every one of which told with killing effect against Palmer, should have availed in the least, or have counted for so much

as a drop against an ocean, in discussing the propriety of enforcing the sentence. I say this with a reference to *future* cases, since any indulgence granted to *him* must have been extended to all future poisoners. Yet on such terms the hands of justice would be paralysed. It will often be impossible (for varying reasons) to show the poison, whilst the poison-inflicted death may be apparent as sun and moon. It is on the same consideration that I would discourage all efforts too earnest for extracting a confession. Otherwise the inevitable recoil will be towards a favourable view of the criminal's case where (through obstinacy or through policy) he has *not* confessed. If once we come to regard confession as the counter-seal of the judicial award and sentence, convicts will not be slow in acting upon that prejudice of the public mind; some clergymen, I fear, will co-operate with that obstinacy in the felon; and, in the absence of confession, the case will be held to want its most solemn ratification. I would say habitually to such criminals—For your own peace of mind, I counsel you to confess. Else, for the satisfaction of public justice, we need it not, and, except in pity for you, we should be careless whether you confess or not.

I have been writing with great energy; partly in consequence of this, have been dreadfully shattered for the last ten days. Every day I have been on the wing for Mavis Bush; this the urgency of the press, which pursued me at the heels up to seven A.M. of yesterday, made next to impossible. But now I am so preparing things, that to a *certainty* on Tuesday evening of next week, or on the following morning, I shall be at home for say ten days.

For dear little Eva I have been ransacking a dreadful book, viz., "Lake Ngami." Dreadful are its records, in which, above all, figures the black rhinoceros; and dreadful are its pictorial illustrations. I want you to walk three and a half miles with me every non-rainy morning. *Can* you do it? Love to my fair young friends at the Elms.

Once again he is under the necessity of asking his [illegible]mily, who had gone on a visit, to return home.

Thursday Night, November 6, 1856, *begun.*

[illegible]ow, my dear Emily, the time is close at hand when, if you

are quite disentangled from engagements, I should feel greatly obliged by your coming home. Yet stop! not *too* soon: pause for a few days, and for the following reason. Several, to wit two (if not three), long letters—one, I think, dated two months ago, were written by me to yourself and to Mr. Craig. Unfortunately they both fell into a pile of papers, from which I never could extricate them without more serious trouble than the press labours would allow me. To-morrow, or maybe to-night, I shall find them. But now, if you were to come away too suddenly, to whom could I send them? These elaborate letters will, in that case, want a reader, which is dreadful. So to a certainty I will send two at least to-morrow or by Sunday. Would you believe it? Not until yesterday, viz., Wednesday, November 5, the clock then striking *four* P.M., did I write the last correction on the last proof, viz., the Prefatory Notice of the new "Confessions." All last night, and I presume all this day, the machine (so I believe they call the last new invention for throwing off copies rapidly) has been at work; and one single copy, wanting the Prefatory Notice, was sent off to London upon Tuesday night, November 4th, for the purpose of being what is technically called *subscribed*. I shall await with some little anxiety the result. For this residence in Edinburgh has for some time been trying to me. I do hope it has put something into your purse, for it has taken a good deal out of mine. Twenty-and-four weeks already I have been here. Inexplicable it seems that I can have spent so much time on the *recast* (for such it is, not simply a revision) of this little book. I will have it sent to M. to-morrow. I wrote a long letter to M. about Froude and the sixteenth century; and, moreover, in the Appendix to the "Confessions," introduced a little anecdote about M. when under two, and Barbara Lewthwaite, which it is likely enough she never heard.

Seven weeks ago come Sunday next—so at least I calculate—I woke in high delirium. No apparent cause could be assigned; but so it was. Mrs. Wilson and her sister, greatly alarmed, summoned Mr. Hogg out of church, who summoned Dr. Burn. In two days I was well again. But I am still persuaded, and have been for a long time, that with [illegible] daily exercise I shall not weather many months [illegible] continual temperance I am well enough.

Did you see the last "Athenæum," which contains a [illegible]

ing notice of Colonel Baird Smith, and connects it in the beginning with a most reasonable protest against a scoundrel doctrine that has been often repeated, to this following effect: viz., that if we British, the present rulers of Hindostan, should retire from it by choice or under compulsion, in that case no memorial would survive of our past rule except a large heap of empty champagne bottles. The "Athenæum" it is not which throws the doctrine into this lively expression, but I have seen it so expressed. It is singular that I had just begun a short paper putting the villainy and ignobility of this sentiment into a conspicuous light. For it is clear that, with the patronisers of this opinion, to raise magnificent tanks, like Akbar and Aurungzebe, or to plant 2000 milestones from the Bay of Bengal to the banks of the Indus—*that* is the only service worth speaking of; but that to make justice accessible to every rank (which in tendency, at least, and by intention we have done), and to shield a hundred and twenty millions of people from outrages such as those of the Pindarris or the Mahrattas—this is nothing.

On Tuesday night, in theory for half an hour, but practically it came to nearly four hours, I went in upon a visit to my opposite neighbours, the W.s. The Doctor, head of the house, who has a son in the artillery, and is a very kind and worthy man, had previously twice called upon me; else I had seen none of the family. The mother is ladylike. The sole daughter, I believe about seventeen, is really a very charming girl, so far as candlelight will permit me to judge. About three weeks ago, when Dr. and Mrs. W. had gone to St. Andrew's with the view of obtaining (which he *did* obtain) a full-blown doctor's degree, there remained behind the daughter and her maternal aunt, a Miss W., said to be a splendid beauty although counting more years than forty. One night soon after the departure of the senior W.s, Miss W. and her niece went to an evening party at Dr. B.'s, somewhere in the New Town. Being late, they went upstairs at a hurried pace, and on reaching the centre of the drawing-room, Miss W. suddenly fell forward and broke a blood-vessel. My informant (my landlady's sister) assured me that a perfect deluge of blood had—such was her housewifely idea—ruined the *fine carpet*. Naturally for some days Miss W. staid at the house; then returning hither, and being attended by Dr. B., in ten days she

was fully re-established, to my great astonishment, and has since departed on a visit to Perthshire; whilst the carpet, I grieve to say, has a very small chance of visiting the Highlands. My visit on Tuesday was an agreeable one. A Dr. W. was there, who had lived much in India, and had done *me* the honour to watch my literary career with interest for thirty-five years. Consequently, besides some excellent coffee, I personally came in for a good deal of pleasant flattery. Last night I was invited for another visit to the W.s which interrupted this letter, and will, I suppose, shove onwards, by one additional day, all my future acts or sayings. Consequently, the almanack of my remaining life shows clearly that the letters meant for Friday's task must fall on Saturday; and one, meant for M., as work for Saturday, will therefore fall on Sunday. Mrs. W. knew in former days Lady Byron, *i.e.* (as you will suppose), Miss Milbanke. And, what surprises me greatly, Mrs. W. reports that she had no pretensions whatever to beauty, but was, she says, very amiable and high-principled. With respect, by the way, to "the deluge of blood," which surprised me so much when taken in combination with Miss W.'s speedy restoration to *travelling* strength, I observe (p. 245, vol. i. of her "Memoirs") that Lady Hester Stanhope, that most odious of Pagan women, describes herself as having on "several" occasions "vomited blood enough to have killed a horse;" and in a letter dated August 21, 1836, she says—"With the blood running out of my mouth, I was collected enough to give orders," &c. So, perhaps (only that Lady Hester was a dreadful fibber), my surprise was the surprise of ignorance. Love to all and some. Ever most affectionately yours.

The question of grammar or no grammar for ladies occupies his consideration; and the following letter, addressed to his daughter Margaret in November 1856, is, we think, full of character and originality:—

Some years ago, you and Florence were inclined to bemoan your supposed misfortune in not having regularly studied English grammar, or, which probably was running in your thoughts, *universal* (what is sometimes called *philosophic*) grammar, under some able governess. With your regrets I

sympathised not at all. Why not? Simply on the following grounds. If the final purpose with you and Florence had been purely a *practical* purpose—viz., the obtaining a more absolute command over your mother tongue—in that case, and in all corresponding cases, my conviction is that exercise, practice, chattering, rattling away "hitty-missy," right or wrong, along the line of ninety-one times twenty-four hours, *i.e.*, through three months right "on end" (an old English phrase for our modern philosophic term "continuously"), there and in that lies the true royal road to correct speaking. All those that, like Lord Bristol's son in the period of Cromwell, have ever arrived at an exquisite vernacular familiarity with the pure racy Castilian, were people surrounded in the very cradle with genuine *Madrilenas*, nurses or duennas of Madrid. Now the English analogon to all this, the corresponding advantage for an English young lady, is daily communication with persons belonging to good society. This I say on the assumption that your wishes had been pointed simply to the attainment of elegant ladylike English; consequently your regrets, if any, to the *failure* in that object.

Therefore, I say, as the sum of all this rigmarole, that so far as your united moan (yours and Florence's) applied itself to grammar as a practical and usable thing, grammar you had, and in all conscience enough. For that woman who does by mere imitation, base mimicry, succeed in speaking pure English, and without knowing the reason why, or being able to assign any principle upon which she prefers the right form which she adopts to the false form which she rejects—that woman, I say, is right enough; and if a subscription is made for her, and it should begin in Tipperary, put down my name at once for half-a-crown, notwithstanding that her virtuous doings are supposed to rest upon suspicious grounds. But, if she talks with as much purity as the affable Archangel, then what I say is, the affable Archangel himself, though he were fifty Raphaels, could do no more. What more, then, was it, my dear girls, that you were subterraneously seeking? What better bread than is made (supposing the astonishing case that any bread really *is* made) of wheat? What more extra-superfine talk than is offered for his Sunday's best by the affable Archangel Raphael?

Shall I guess? I believe that—I fancy that—I will suggest

that you were both seeking by a metaphysical instinct, sometimes were consciously seeking, oftener perhaps subconsciously (and confounding it with your kindred but subordinate study of *English* grammar), were both seeking the fine and subtle threads of philosophical grammar, that subject which first was taught to grow and prosper in an English atmosphere by Harris, the same whose son, Lord Malmesbury, subsequently figured in British diplomacy, and made us a present of the angelic Caroline of Wales.

Now, then, having through much floundering reached this subject, upon this I wish to prose.—The book, at least the leading book of Harris upon this subject, is called "Harris's Hermes." Hermes (in Greek Ἑρμῆς) means the Roman god Mercury—the Interpreter by means of speech. In this book Harris discusses such questions as, Why do we say *she* of a ship? why *he* if the ship be an enemy? why *she* of moral qualities—fortitude, patience, virtue, &c.? Why, again, *he* of the sun, and *she* of the moon? Oddly enough, however perhaps you know, the Germans reverse this: the moon is mond—*Squire* moon; the sun is *Miss* sun—viz., *die* sonne.

Masc.	*Fem.*	*Neut.*
Der	Die	Das (our article *the*).

Well, now, this article *the* furnishes a large field for the circumgyrations of philosophical grammar. Generally, you know, in ordinary English grammars it is said that *the* merely individualises, whilst *a* generalises. For instance, "If a beggar comes, give him a penny,"—that is, any beggar whatsoever—any penny. But if you had said, "I met the beggar to-day, and told him what you said," at once you are understood to speak of a known individual beggar. True, that is one use of *the*, but that will not justify us in characterising this article as the individualising article, the *definite* article, as it is called (antithetically to *a*) in all grammars; for it is also intensely the generalising article—*e.g.*, "The moralist may say what he will, but the statesman will reply;" "As yet Australia has accumulated no records: the historian or the biographer is hardly wanted." Or again, "The soldier tired of war's alarms;" *i.e.*, not any special or individual soldier, but universally all soldiers, every soldier. Now, is it not strange that this great function of *the* never yet, according to my experience, has been publicly noticed? Well, another case of the same nature un-

expectedly offers itself at this moment—for, as I write, *a* clock (or at least amongst the vast household of clocks, *some* clock) gives warning that, if in the Scottish expression it should be "spared," very soon it will publish a correct edition of a valuable truth, viz., that it is five o'clock; and so I must pull up sharp. Now here, I might mean by "*a* clock" a particular clock known to you and me—a special clock, conventionally understood between us—or, in the very opposite sense (as in fact I *did* mean), any clock, any possible specimen of that genus whose office is to measure the motion of time, and to call aloud its subdivisions. In the prior use of *a* it individualises; in the latter, surely not.

A copy of the "Confessions" was sent to you on Tuesday; it was the earliest that could be made ready. Criticise furiously and without mercy. The next will be the *final* edition, far different and far better. I am weary to death by my six months' exertion. Surely, whatever blots I may have left, in some things I *must* have improved the book.

[redacted]e is led to discuss the question of the originality of Plato's doctrine of immortality by his daughter Margaret [redacted]mmunicating to him the mistaken views of a "very [redacted]oman," whom he thus sets right on that great

My Dear Margaret,—The female friend whom you describe as so clever, and even philosophic, I have no doubt really *is* so; and I am glad of it, because it requires some little philosophy to bear being told, what in this case, as an honest man, I am *obliged* to [redacted]our friend—that she is memorably and doubly in the wrong [redacted]rong in supposing Plato by any vestige, shadow, or fraction of an idea entitled in this case to the credit of originality—wrong even more conspicuously in supposing Wordsworth *not* entitled [redacted]that credit. So it is, and long since, a settled case amongst [redacted]chools of Christendom, that Plato was as far astray upon this question of *immortality* as it is well possible to be. What little he offered on this subject that ever struck any man as novel was not true, if it were *his*—was not *his*, if it were true. And me it vexes in a degree not easily described, that, by reason of this wretched Plato's criminal blunders, here am I, on a rainy night

(Saturday, May 27), with wheat at four guineas a quarter, having some to buy and none to sell, under a present necessity of almost affronting the lady whom, by your account of her accomplishments, so much I could have wished to flatter. Necessity, however, has no law; and without preface I come to business.

The lady says, "I have found it at last, entombed ages back amidst the thoughts of the great immortal Plato." Found IT! Found *what?* Apparently, if I understand the case, what she has found is the general idea of immortality as a possible attribute of the human soul. But surely, if Wordsworth's originality were supposed for one moment to depend upon his having first suggested such a doctrine, the immortal Plato's originality would be quite as much at stake. No man could be arrogant enough and silly enough to claim any such originality. Coeval with human nature, twin-born with man himself, must have been the belief in man's immortality. Neither in his own person, nor through his disciples, did Plato ever dream of advancing so preposterous a pretension as that of having first suggested a privilege of immortality for the human soul. What Plato claimed was that for this old, old doctrine—old probably as the stars—he f[illegible] had alleged particular arguments. Not the doctrine, but proof of the doctrine—not the hypothesis, but the presumptions in support of that hypothesis—offered the field upon which [illegible] originality could be claimed either for Plato or for Word[illegible] As regards the mere naked doctrine, that the soul of [illegible] probably be immortal, any pretence to having originated this [illegible] have been not less ridiculous in Plato than in Wordsworth. Ages before either, the idea and the aspiration must have been as familiar to the speculations of the philosopher, and to the hopes of the ordinary working man, as it is at this day. Difference thus far there could have been none between Wordsworth and [illegible] To this extent they stood upon the same identical level.

Now, then, having cleared the ground of preliminary misconceptions, let us ask at what point commenced the differences which divides them? Wordsworth, not less than Plato, gave his sanction to the doctrine that the human soul revealed signs a[illegible] mises of an immortal destiny. But upon what argument[illegible] Upon arguments, I reply, so thoroughly different, that neither of the two, supposing them for a moment to have been contemporaries, could by possibility be imagined to have borrowed anything from the other. In relation to each other they are both

equally original. This reciprocal originality meantime would not interfere with the possibility that each might have borrowed from other quarters. In that respect, therefore, how does the truth stand? To all appearance it stands thus—Plato, in his famous Dialogue (*Phædo*), amongst various plausibilities more or less conjectural in behalf of this great doctrine, offers one solitary argument, that to many loose thinkers has worn the semblance of logical proof. By all philosophers of eminence it has been denounced, however, as hollow and unsound; and supposing it better than it really is, I have no doubt whatever that it could not have been in any absolute sense the argument of Plato; for, considering the physics and the rude chemistry of the Platonic age, it is manifestly an argument that must have occurred to thousands. On the other hand, Wordsworth has brought forward two separate arguments which yield strong presumptions in favour of the great doctrine, and of these both are evidently original. I say *that*, because no trace of either is to be found in any author whatever, ancient or modern.

I have said that Plato's argument is rejected as worthless by profound thinkers. But it is no practice of mine to rely upon [illegible] authorities. By very much I prefer to any allegation of this man's opinion or that man's opinion upon an argument the very argument itself, served up (like John the Baptist's head) on a silver dish. Briefly, then, what *is* the little argument of Plato? It [illegible] the ancients had a rude notion that the destruction of a thing was representable only as a process of separation amongst its elements. If the thing were formed by composition from A, B, C, then by an inverse process of decomposition, by separating from each other those elements A and B and C, it would perish. Wherever there was a synthesis, regressively there might be a corresponding analysis. But how if there were no synthesis, no composition? In that case there could be no resolution. If the substance of a thing were not any result from the cohesion of factors radically different, in that case there could be no decomposition. Vainly would you seek to destroy by separating the cohesive parts, if there were no such parts to separate. A substance perfectly homogeneous, they fancied, was liable to no corruption. Heterogeneity it was that made an opening for destruction. Now, in consciousness, and therefore in the human soul as the organ of consciousness, they fancied such a homogeneity. The unity of its substance they fancied to [illegible]

and consequently its indiscerptibility or non-liability to violent separation. It was, therefore, by its very texture indestructible, as involving no heterogeneous elements.

It is to be regretted that the rest of this letter is so mutilated as to be undecipherable. The following letter has a more than ordinary value on account of the clear law which it lays down respecting the legitimacy of suggested readings on the text of classic authors. Besides, it affords an evidence of the way in which he sought to interest his family in everything that he was interested in :—

My Dear Margaret,—I believe you would not understand the particular object which I had in sending you that couple of leaves detached from the "United Church Journal" for September 1856. The fact is, that if in this world I ever hit the *bull's-eye* (is not *that* the technical expression for the very centre of the centre on a target?) it was in my conjectural restoration of that much litigated passage, so senseless as it now stands, in the "Domitian" of Suetonius. Now the critic in the "Church Journal" resists my emendation on the ground that the present reading is quite satisfactory. Assuredly I shall not [illegible] him in his dream; at the first leisure moment I shall awaken him; and as I wish you to understand the grounds of my argument, it became necessary to furnish you with his objections. For itself, the question must naturally have little interest for you; yet *any* enigma that has tortured men's wits for two hundred and fifty years must a little stimulate the curiosity of all peo[illegible] that extend a liberal *breadth* of interest to past fields of liter[illegible] puzzles or conundrums. In Somersetshire they have whole acres devoted to the culture of *teazles*, which are things that the makers of woollen cloth use for *teasing* the cloth in some stage of its manufacture. *Why* and *wherefore*, it is surely *their* business to explain, and not mine. Now, these puzzles that arise from disturbed and dislocated words or letters may be called teazles, as standing in something the same relation to the wits and conjectural faculties of scholars that teazles do to [illegible] The peculiar felicity of any emendation lies in

this: that the vestiges of the true and recovered reading shall be clearly traceable in a natural corruption of this reading, such as we find it in the existing text. Any man can suggest a reading that will make plausible sense, but the thing demanded is to show how this true reading might easily and naturally fall into the corrupt form now occupying the text. Many are the passages, past counting are the passages, that in Shakespeare are waiting for this felicitous surgery. Some of these, I hope, rely upon *my* aid; but never can I hope for a case of so much *luck* as this in Suetonius.

Last night I was at a party; it was a tea-party given by my new friends Dr. and Mrs. W——. Present, Mrs. G——, wife of Dr. G——, one of the Edinburgh Professors, and notorious for his evangelicality—she and some grand-daughters; also a Mrs. H——, with, I think, three daughters. Mama and one of the daughters I talked with, and thought them very agreeable. They told me that, although Scotch by descent, they held themselves to be English. Dr. W——, a Bengal man, very amiable. There was also a young man, son of a banker, qualifying for the bar, apparently agreeable, but chiefly noticeable as being so tall that you would naturally measure him by *ells* (*Anglicè*, fathoms of six feet) rather than lesser sub-dimensions. I had the honour to be the central figure in this party, the avowed object of it having been to present me to Dr. and Mrs W——'s select friends. I wore a scarlet coat—no, by the way, it was brown; salmon-coloured trousers—no, on consideration, they were grey; buff waistcoat; a beard of six months' growth, which has won so general an approbation that I am shy of mowing it. I also sported a new pocket-handkerchief of the finest texture that the looms of Cashmere could produce. Briefly it is not for miserable prose, but for poetry alone, to describe the brilliancy of my costume.

In the next note, to his daughter Emily, he intimates his intense anxiety respecting India and the fate of his daughter Florence—Mrs. Baird Smith:—

Monday, June 29, 1857.

My Dear Emily,—You doubtless are suffering under the same anxiety as myself about our poor dear Florence. Let me tell you all that *I* know, then do you write as soon as possible to

tell me all that *you* know. Yesterday (that is, Sunday, late in the evening) by pure accident Miss Stark came and asked me if I knew that late on Saturday there had been an important second or third edition published of the "Scotsman." The "Daily Scotsman" is the particular paper which I take in; and on Saturday before eight in the morning I had received it as usual. At that hour there was no news stirring; but now it seemed something was wrong. *About China* Miss Stark thought. But I, upon occasion of the still to this hour unexplained and mysterious mutiny in the Native 34th Regiment, had a misgiving that it would be India. With great difficulty, day being Sunday, a copy of the Saturday-night edition was obtained; and it then appeared that India it was. Three regiments at Meerut had mutinied—1 cavalry, 2 infantry; they had been attacked by our British regiments; beaten, but able to retreat upon Delhi, where (the Marseilles report was) they had massacred all *white* people.

All this you have heard, no doubt. Now tell me Colonel Baird Smith's last station; how is it named? But above all, how is it situated? Surely not on the route from Meerut to Delhi?

What I have *since* seen—viz., on this Monday—is an article in the "Daily News" (London paper) from its correspondent, not at Marseilles, but at Trieste. This article says that the Mutiny had also broken out at Ferozepore (Fred's station, is it not?); two native regiments being specified as amongst the mutineers—viz., the 45th and 57th. But in the action which ensued between the revolters and the British, the Trieste report went on to say that the 10th (Native) Cavalry maintained their allegiance, and that in consequence the mutineers were "broken and dispersed." At *that* station the tide had evidently turned, for the 57th were even rendering their arms.

It is certain, as in all such cases, that everything will have been dreadfully exaggerated; and, as one example of this, from Delhi the assurance was that the massacre of the British had been universal and undiscriminating; but *now*, though so little time has elapsed, this horrid butchery is reduced to "*eleven*" officers killed.

So I hope for more cheerful accounts. But what insanity is it that has governed our Indian administrators, if, knowing causes

of fierce irritation amongst the Sepoys, they have persisted in lazily neglecting them, and suffering such perilous discontents to ferment in extensive camps?—Yours affectionately,

T. DE Q.

The following letter soon passes into the same absorbing subject:—

Sunday, November 1, 1857.

MY DEAR EMILY,—On Tuesday (was it not?) your letter reached me; Tuesday *last*, not next Tuesday; for which I am much obliged to you, as also for reading "Dr Parr." By the way, my next volume contains another biographic article, viz., "Richard Bentley," which you would oblige me by reading. And on this principle it is worth reading—that he *was* all which Parr pretended to be; the very prince of scholars, who has given to England in this department the very same unapproachable supremacy which she enjoys in so many other departments. It happens also, most appropriately to any comparison of him with Parr, that he (like Parr) filled a conspicuous station in the Church of England—and with what result? Even the sycophants of P. did not pretend that any one of his huge "*Spital Sermons*" had rendered any appreciable service to 1. Religion; 2. Theology; 3. The Church which paid him, as against the Dissenters whose [redacted] licked and polished *gratis*. But as to Bentley, who [redacted] the chair of our present justly renowned Whewell, and [redacted]id the burthensome cares of that great office (Master hip of Trinity, Cambridge) upon his shoulders through forty years—the space of time for which the children of Israel wandered unprofitably in the wilderness,—*he* preached the lecture founded by the illustrious Robert Boyle at least through two annual courses, and left behind him, if nothing else, the immortal service of smashing for ever and ever that resounding argument against Christianity which founds itself upon the allegation (a true allegation) that the text of the New Testament rocked unsteadily under a load of thirty thousand various readings (since then greatly enlarged); the inference from which, urged spitefully by free-thinkers, was, that the Christian doctrines must be liable to thirty thousand doubts or varieties of interpretation. This argument, by a close and stern review, B. *so* floored, that, throughout a flight of one

hundred and sixty years,* it has never again looked up. Now I should be glad to see any similar feat traced to that Brummagem generation of vi*pers*, or (as some copies read) of vi*parrs*, which once infested the little village sheepfold of Hatton. I will not trouble you further with any egotism about my own vol. vii. except to say :—

1. That it will soon be afloat, having already reached (as regards the printing) some page *ahead of* p. 270.

2. That two at least, but I think three, of the six volumes already published have *silently* gone into second editions.

3. That the London publishers, Messrs. Groombridge, say, that, as the collection advances, the volumes show a tendency to sell more rapidly, and that they are aware of many book-buyers and book-clubs waiting for the close of the collection before they purchase.

INDIA.—Up to the *last mail but one* (or briefly, in its Latin form, up to the penultimate mail), I suffered in my nervous system to an extent that (except once in 1812) had not experimentally been made known to me as a possibility. Every night, oftentimes all night long, I had the same dream—a vision of children, most of them infants, but not all, the *first* rank being girls of five and six years old, who were standing in the air outside, but so as to touch the window; and I heard, or perhaps fancied that I heard, always the same dreadful word, *Delhi*, not then knowing that a word even more dreadful—Cawnpore—was still in arrear. This fierce shake to my nerves caused almost from the [redacted] a new symptom to expose itself (of which previously I [redacted] had the faintest outline), viz., somnambulism; and now [redacted] night, to my great alarm, I wake up to find myself at the window, which is sixteen feet from the nearest side of the bed. The horror was unspeakable from the hell-dog Nena or Nana; how if this fiend should get hold of Florence and her baby (now within seventeen days of completing her half-year)? What first gave me any relief was a good firm-toned letter dated *Rourkee* in the public journals, from which it was plain that *Rourkee* had found itself able to act *aggressively*.

To a neighbour's daughter he conveys his impressions

* First *published* (*i.e.*, *preached*, not printed), I believe, in 1696–97.

of the trial of Madeline Smith, which produced such an unprecedented interest in Scotland:—

Wednesday, July 8.

My Dear Miss Widnell,—Every day for a fortnight back I have been on the brink of writing to you; and since Monday week, *i.e.*, since the calamitous Bengal news, with one motive more than usual for seeking to engage your special attention. First, however, let me speak to what at this moment engages my own immediate attention, viz., the morning's wet newspaper now lying on my breakfast-table. This newspaper is the "Daily Scotsman" for Wednesday, July 8, so perhaps you have seen it, containing the speech against Miss Madeline Smith delivered yesterday by the Lord Advocate. Fortunately for justice, the other side will be heard to-day, and there is a reasonable hope that the Dean of Faculty may find it possible to efface the impression left upon the minds of the jury, or at the least to re-establish something like an equilibrium of favour between the parties.

To me it seems that from the very first Miss Smith has been cruelly treated. Never in the world was a young woman summoned to face an agony so frightful as that of *hearing* her letters read in an assembly of men and boys—oftentimes coarse, brutal, scoffing—and read for what purpose? This is what I vainly seek to hear explained. How is such a charge as that against her affected for the better or the worse by the tone or the phraseology of her letters? This way or that, the letters on the one side, the indictment on the other, cannot surely be held to have any the very slightest connection. It is very possible that I, reading hurriedly, have missed some clause in the reasoning of the court which may have established a *nexus* * between them; else I should be warranted in asserting that there is none. Or *if* any, only this,—which surely looks too subtle and fantastic to estimate, in the remotest degree to appreciate—that refrigeration and almost unnatural revulsion in Miss Madeline's feelings towards M. L'Angellier which could be supposed capable of listening to any whisper that suggested

* *Nexus:* All Latin words, since you either are or are to be my Latin pupil, I feel it a stern duty to leave untranslated.

his death by poison. You must have actually read, experimentally you must have felt, the unfathomable depth which divides the two sets of letters. The transition, it may be said, from the one set to the other is necessary for comprehending the final state of desperation in Miss Smith; and that state of desperation is necessary for comprehending (is a *conditio sine qua non*—[Pupil, consult your dictionary!]), for feeling and realising the last resource of murderous violence. It is, in short, as a key to the strange altered character of Miss Smith's feelings that the concurrent alteration in the style of her letters is appealed to.

I am growing wearisome, but I use so many words only because I feel that such procedure could scarcely be justified by any *conceivable* advantages resulting to the course of public justice, whilst the *actual* advantages in the present case are really none at all; but, even when measured by the Lord Advocate, are miserably incommensurate to the public outrage thus *judicially* sanctioned. That question, however, is past and gone, the outrage has been tolerated, the suffering from the exposure has been drunk off; and now comes another stage of dreadful expectation, pervading all ranks alike; for the public interest runs higher by far than in any case that ever I heard of. What terrifies everybody is the audacious tone of the Lord Advocate, so confident (almost, I should say, exultingly confident) of winning the game against Miss Smith. Here are a few specimens of his equity:—

1. He describes L'Angellier as not constitutionally liable to choleraic or other attacks. *Ans.* The Dundee evidence.

2. He assumes, on no proof or shadow of proof, that L'Angellier had an interview with Miss Smith on Sunday night, March 22. The appointment was for Saturday. I suppose Miss Smith willing to remedy the failure, this might not be (often *was* not) in her power.

3. The Lord Advocate ascribes the full weight of candid sincerity to L'Angellier's suspicions that Miss Smith had meant to poison him. And yet to this same man, in the imaginary interview of the Sunday night, this Lord Advocate ascribes so entire a disregard of his own avowed suspicions, that Miss Smith is accredited as having effected her purpose of a triple dose solely through the blind credulity of this awakened victim.

In the autumn of 1857 his daughter Emily went to Ireland on a visit to Mrs. Craig, her sister—a fact which has left in record some letters delayed at Lasswade longer than in some cases was desirable. The following reply to the Captain of the Manchester Grammar School was called forth by this circumstance:—

My Dear Sir,—Your letter of September 4, inviting me to the commemoration festival of the Manchester Grammar School, reached me about noon on this day, Tuesday, October 13. The cause of delay was simple enough. It had found its way originally to Lasswade, near which place (about seven miles distant), my youngest daughter and myself have a cottage; and accordingly *that* is my regular address. But for the greater part of the past year my daughter has been visiting one of her married sisters who lives in Ireland; and for my own part, the labour of overlooking the press has detained me away from Lasswade for the last seventy-two weeks, during which period I have gone out of doors only for half an hour, and in a carriage. Your letter, therefore, with all others of every description, was packed up in a miscellaneous parcel, and this parcel by a mere accident was opened this day. It would convey a false impression, however, if I should leave you to suppose that I had not been otherwise recalled to the business of your letter during the long interval of forty days. Mr. Hogg has repeatedly made me acquainted with your obliging messages sent through *him*, and he therefore is free from blame. All the blame that *can* attach to the case is mine; and in ordinary circumstances I should think myself inexcusable, but in such circumstances no such delay could have occurred. I plead for myself the same excuse—derived from the inexpressible horror and agitation connected since the end of June with the convulsions in Bengal—which so many of our fellow-countrymen have, pressing with unusual severity upon a nervous system in some degree shaken by forty-five years' use of opium.

Pardon my abruptness if any should seem to mark my style of communication, and also my egotism, which in this case is inevitable. Two years ago my second daughter married Lieut.-Colonel Baird Smith, who enjoyed considerable reputation in Bengal as an engineer officer, and was also favourably known

by his connection with irrigation for the N. W. Provinces. The station at which he resided was a small and obscure one, viz., Rourkee; and when first this hideous explosion of malignity began, I heard with great thankfulness that the station had these two vast advantages—first, that it was not a depôt for public treasure; and, secondly, that it lay upon a byroad, not leading to any place more important than itself. It possessed, besides, a sufficient stock of guns from 6 to 24-pounders. The native sappers and miners, however, that happened to be quartered at Rourkee were amongst the earliest mutineers, but fortunately not until they had been tempted away and absorbed into Delhi. Meantime, no place could be entirely safe; and one alarming incident, which exposed at the same moment the weakness and the strength of the place, occurred at an early stage of the enormities. One evening about six or seven, when the resident British (or, in the ridiculous slang of the day, the Europeans) were all gathered together at dinner, a servant whispered to Colonel Baird Smith that a detachment of about forty native troopers had ridden into the station, and desired to speak with the commandant. Colonel Baird Smith said nothing to the company, but immediately went out, and naturally in some anxiety, for though the men had not announced themselves as mutineers, he had little doubt that such they were. He thought it best to try this question by telling them that in his opinion the best course for them was to move off to Meerut. The men replied that such was not *their* way of thinking. "Very well," said the Colonel, "come, then, to this open area, where you can feed your horses whilst we discuss the point in question." Naturally they followed him without suspicion, and in a few seconds found themselves arrayed before a battery unmasked, which could have closed the discussion with an unanswerable syllogism of scenical catastrophe. Under this advantage, he dismounted them and also disarmed them; and for the present the danger had melted away.

This letter gives the first hint of a project which, somewhat to the surprise of all, he carried out, though not without considerable distress and difficulty, in new circumstances—a journey to Ireland to visit Mrs. Craig:—

My Dear Margaret,—Emily's letter, enclosing a few lines from yourself, reached me *this morning*. Along with these came a "*leader*" of October 21, and a straw-coloured letter from "D—— L——," dated Charleston, S. Carolina, October 3, 1856, whose main request is, that I would "*write one line that will permit (your own express permission I ardently desire) your name to Christianise my first-born son.*" But note, I am to send one line "*that will contain one truth, one fact, or one great thought, which I can give to him when he begins to bud and blossom as a human thing.*" Truths run rather low with me at this moment; but I should think he would consider three falsehoods at *par* with one truth. He has taken the trouble to send his letter to Boston, U.S., at a rude guess I should say 1500 miles. At Boston it is of course forwarded by Messrs. Ticknor, Reed, and *Fields* (is that name right? for I have always some perplexity about it); and from Boston it hops over to Lasswade, a matter of 3000 miles. Then from Lasswade to Tipperary how many? Shall we say, thither and back again to Edinburgh, 550, vaguely calculated thus:—A. Edinburgh to Carlisle, say 90 miles. B. Carlisle to Liverpool, 122 miles. C. Across to Dublin, 60 miles=278. This (viz., 278) taken to and fro, *i.e.*, doubled, makes 556; and there remains the *to and fro* between Dublin and Pegsborough—what is *that?* Is not the entire journey from Dublin to Pegsborough equal to 120 miles? Enlighten me. If it is, then 240 miles added to 556 will want but four miles of 800, and that gives a total of 5200. But I am quite in the dark about your Irish section of the journey; which, however, is, at this present time, simply the most interesting route in Christendom, closing, as that vista does, in the little *Eicon* (if not *Basilikē*, yet doubtless) *Angelikē* of dear Eva. Most anxious I am to see her. And if I were destined to take no further journey in this life, supposing (I mean to say) that such a restriction upon my locomotive faculties were already entered into her adamantine ledger by the haughty lady Destiny, I should warn her of a probable *erratum* impending; *one* such erratum at the least, viz., involved in one journey to a certainty *ex voto* (*i.e.*, in discharge of a vow made on hearing of her birth) to the shrine of her little holiness, Eva Margaret Craig. So far, at all events, if no further, I must rise in rebellion against any decree of the gloomy trinity, Clotho, Lachesis,

and Atropos, which should tend to draw an enchanter's circle of arrestment about my vagrancies ahead!

I am greatly obliged by any letter that has run such a circuit, and of course it becomes a duty to reply. But, as Cassio, whilst allowing that the ensign must be saved, yet insists on the lieutenant's salvation taking precedency, so it strikes me that I ought to send "one truth, one fact, or one great thought" to Pegsborough, before I can be free to export any similar commodity to Charleston. And the truth is, that I have for some time back had a fact, whilst also, the fact is, that I have for some time had a truth, packed up, or as good as packed up, and corded, for sending over to you. Both the fact and the truth, I scarcely need to say, relate to dear little Eva, who at this moment, I believe, by the courtesy of Europe, takes precedency of all flesh."

The subject is still present to his mind as he writes recording his son Frederick's arrival from India :—

MY DEAR M.,—This day is Sunday, July 11, but as the light is already decaying, there is little or no prospect of getting this letter into the post-office before to-morrow. So in effect I may as well date my letter at once Monday, July 12, by which Jesuitical artifice I shall perhaps escape a black eye from Sir A. Agnew in case we should ever meet in Hades.

Paul Fred (or, as *he* reads the record, Fred Paul) presented himself here on Friday last at 4 P.M.; he and Emily had travelled down from Boston on the preceding day, and were both anxious chiefly to concert plans and combine movements with me for invading Tipperary as soon as possible. Being called on so suddenly for my report upon the possibilities as connected with my own wishes on the one side and my own engagements (I mean *promises*) on the other, I made my answer as dubious as oracles of old sought to make *theirs*. But this, as I have said, was on Friday; and Saturday's meditation showed me that I might reconcile a journey of ten or fifteen days with all my previous responsibilities, if casuistically examined. Fred dated the time of our journey as ten days distant, but *that* was on Friday.

Emily had prepared me, by one of her Boston letters, to look for little change in Fred. And in fact there is none, except as regards complexion and expansion of chest. His complexion is

emphatically what you would call *sunny;* not *tanned*, which is a fugitive grace, but burnt in, encaustically painted. You seem to read a century of sunlights *funded* in his face. All that an apricot ought to be (for it owes its name to the Latin word *Apricus*,* warmed and coloured by the solar orb) *that* is Fred. And as regards his *chest*, it is exceedingly like *a chest of drawers*, so great is the expansion across the shoulders. This sally of wit, I am sorry to confess, is a plagiarism from Hamilton Reynolds, a witty friend of mine some thirty-four years back. But what is the use of witty friends, if one may not plunder them once in thirty-four years? And, moreover, I have restored it to the vocabulary of compliment; whereas my friend Hamilton R. had occasion to apply it to the case of a *female* friend, who trespassed too much in her mature dimensions upon the sacred privileges of the male sex.

Now let me call your attention to a little matter, but which Mr. John, minimus, and Miss Eva may chance to regard as the weightiest matter in the whole letter.

There is plenty of time for you to write and tell me what little thing there is which would be likely to meet some want or fancy of both. I am not at this moment so rich as in a month (or possibly less) I shall be. Consequently, what I wish for at this moment is something trivial as regards cost. Emily fancied perhaps a doll for Miss Eva, but I objected that doubtless her household of dolls is already mounted. As to books, *a tiger-book*, *a wolf-book*, *an elephant-book*, are what I have long been preparing, but I do not wish to spoil them by sending them prematurely. I am, in short, aground in my speculations on this point; but as there is time still for you to write a few lines of instruction to me, perhaps you will do so. At present for take notice it is no longer Sunday—*that* is all used up—and regard to the whole of this present page, *Tuesday*, or by all [illegible] even Wednesday, unhappily may come to be the date) plan is to leave this place on Wednesday, July 21, and to stay with you about eight, nine, or ten days. Fred and Emily came over this morning; and this was the arrangement proposed by Emily. For Johnny, your latest hope, my suggestion was that a rake, a

* "*Apricus.*" What do I mean by that – placed over the *i*? I mean simply that *Apricus* must not be pronounced as if rhyming to *Africus*, but as if rhyming to *Fredericus*.

spade, and a hammer, gimlet, and bag of nails might be a proper *nuzzur* to approach him with. But Emily thinks that even now he has more spades than *I* have. But if you can indicate any better implement of industry, or war, or skill, either here or at Belfast I will look out for it.

It is not often that one looks with hope and expectation to the capacities of hatred and scorn in one's friends. But at present both Fred and I are likely to be dismally disappointed if you do not go along with us in our demoniac abhorrence, and also our infinite disdain, of the thrice-accursed Sepoys. No tongue can give utterance to the burning wrath which kindles within us at the very word Sipahee, and its contraction Sepoy. Did Fred tell you in any letter of the particular little plot which these childish devils were brewing ten or twelve months ago at Peshawur? On a certain day they had made sure of the 70th (Queen's Regiment) being called away at night to engage and afterwards to hunt through patches of jungle (or other cover) a native regiment then in full explosion of its mutinous venom. Luckily on that day a rumour arose in alarming strength that the native corps within the lines of encampment, amounting to five regiments, had (in the teeth of contradicting reports from our British officers appointed to search them for concealed arms and ammunition) contrived to bury and otherwise hide a redundant quantity of all that was needed to make them efficient enemies. Most happily this suspicion renewed itself in greater strength than ever within a few hours of the critical moment when neglect of it or delay would have been fatal and irretrievable. Search was made once more, and this time not a "make-believe" search. Arms of every kind were found in abundance, and in consequence a most seasonable change in the military arrangements. A Sikh regiment was sent against the mutineers; our own 70th was kept in the station; and there was made a further revelation of a plot for murdering all the women, children, and sick soldiers.

Last date—7 P.M. on Wednesday, July 14. Fred was here this morning again. I believe we start on Wednesday, July 21. To-morrow without fail, rest of this letter, and final arrangement as to starting.

It can very readily be imagined that a trip to Ireland was a serious undertaking for one who had so little

faculty for dealing with new scenes and circumstances. The journey, however, was accomplished, and here we find De Quincey, on his return, pleasantly recalling some of its more memorable points :—

My Dear M.,—This is Friday night, and I, being in a mood for chattering, with no obvious recipient on whom to bestow my tediousness, select yourself as one that cannot run away from the deluge. First, let me take a flying retrospect of our late visit to Lisheen, which to me has certainly been beneficial. You remarked a change of appearance; and since my resettling here this change has become more palpably marked in sleep, in dreaming, in appetite, and other circumstantialities of daily life. One remorse only I carry away from Lisheen, viz., that I did not kiss the little bonny mouth of Buddee. Mr. Craig, in a slight way, at Goold's Cross, reproached me with this omission as if an oversight. But oversight it was not. The secret consideration which moved me to suppress the request (that else was on my lips) to visit his pillow, was the belief that Buddee slept in the arms of Joanna, who, if a truly derived daughter of our sad old "ganmama," Eve, the orchard-breaker, would not relish the sudden intrusion upon her nocturnal deshabille of a foreigneering Protestant. True, that afterwards I saw Joanna in the hall; but this was at a moment of hurry and general valediction.

Let me rehearse the stages of our travelling experience. To Goold's Cross we drove under the restless faith that we were too late. But once *at* Mr. Goold's station, we found ourselves "shunted" into the rearguard of those who are summoned to exercise of patience by wearing the character of people foolishly and sneakingly too soon. Thus was realised for the thousandth time the word which the prophet spake at my birth—This man shall always be in time, and indeed basely in time; but, for all *that*, he shall never once escape the pangs too late. Cassandra, by a like fate, having consented the gift of prophecy as a silent pledge that she would ir the amorous suit of Apollo, nevertheless jilted the indignant God. To recall his gift was impossible; but he poisoned it by the curse attached to her predictions that she should never be believed till it was too late to reap the benefits

of the warning. Just so did the good fairy say to me on my natal morning, August 15, 1785—"My lad, I've a kind of liking for you; and herewith I make you a little present." "What is it, ma'am, if you please?" "What is it? Why, if you *must* know, it is this: that most odious of vices, which men call procrastination, shall never dare to come near you." "Very true," replied the bad fairy, who had seated her fat person on the other side of the bed, "thrue for you: procrastinate he shall not; he shall be the chief and the leader upon earth of all miso-procrastinators; but still he shall reap the two grand penalties of procrastination the very worst." "Indeed! you wicked old lady: and what penalties are those?" "Why, these two: in midst of *too-soonness* he shall suffer the killing anxieties of *too-lateness*. In Dr. Donne's words—

> 'He shall *dream* treason; and believe that he
> Meant to perform it; and confess, and die;
> And no record tell why.'

Secondly, which is the other penalty, he shall suffer the endless reproach of procrastinating."

Suppose us then embarked on the Great South-Eastern Railroad about 7 A.M. Somewhere in the forenoon we reached Dublin. But of course our fate is always to find ourselves at the wrong station, and, at present, in search of the true and orthodox station, we entered on a course of discovery that to me seemed by very much more tedious than our ninety-five miles' rush from Mr. Goold's Cross to Dublin. Endlessly we draw along the most dusty of quays or wharfs (or wharves), and always, as in some infinite dream, on looking forward in hopeless inquiry for the cause of our funeral pace, we found the same solution of the mystery, viz., that we were creeping along at the tail of 666 waggons.

The notion of a fate dooming him to live perpetually under the fear of being too late, was one that [illegible] pressed in several varying versions. The follow[illegible] so exquisite and dainty in its way, that we brave [illegible] risk of being accused of repetition in giving it as a successor to the version in the preceding letter:—

"At my birth, among the fairies that honoured this event by their presence was one—an excellent creature—who said, "The gift which I bring for the young child is this: among the dark lines in the woof of his life I observe one which indicates a trifle of procrastination as lying amongst his frailties, and from that frailty I am resolved to take out the sting. My gift, therefore, is—that, if he must always seem in danger of being too late, he shall very seldom be so in fact." Upon which up jumped a wicked old fairy, vexed at not having received a special invitation to the natal festivity, who said, "*You*'ll take the sting out,will you? But now, madam, please to see me put it back again. *My* gift is—that, if seldom actually in danger of being too late, he shall always be in fear of it. Not often completing the offence, he shall for ever be suffering its penalties." Yes, reader, so she said; and so it happened. The curse which she imposed I could not evade. My only resource was to take out my revenge in affronting her. On this occasion I whispered to her, whilst mounting the box, "Well, old girl, here I am; and, *as usual*, quite in time." That word "*as usual*" must, I knew, be wormwood to her heart, so I repeated it, saying, "Your malice, old cankered lady, is defeated, you see, *as usual*." "Certainly, my son," was her horrid reply, "you are in time, and generally you are so. But it grieves me to know that for the last half hour you have been suffering horrid torments of mind."

Thus far we have allowed ourselves to travel into the sphere of private domestic relationship. Our purpose in doing so will have been fully attained if the reader has been led to feel that De Quincey's almost morbid peculiarities, which led him sometimes to live apart from his family for considerable periods, did not spring from any lack of affection for them.

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As suggestive of other associations, quaint and characteristic in their own way, arising out of the Lothian-Street life, we may here give some extracts

from a letter addressed to us by Mr. Richard Rowe, author of "Episodes in an Obscure Life":—

"My first lodgings in Edinburgh," he writes, "were the rooms in Lothian Street in which De Quincey died—I was, in fact, the next tenant. The good people of the house, a widow, her maiden sister, and a niece, had a very worshipful recollection of their "nice little gentleman"—that was their phrase for him. They evidently liked him, and said that he was 'bonnie' and 'soft-spoken.' They showed with some pride the relics of him they possessed, which could certainly claim the sanctity of antiquity. The affectionate reverence they showed was very genuine.

"The maiden sister was De Quincey's messenger, and on the strength of the printing offices she had been in, and the literary men she had spoken to, had come to look upon herself as almost a bluestocking. She told me that she sat for hours with De Quincey, arranging his books, numbering his slips of *copy*, &c. Her notion of his mode of composition, however, almost proved that their affectionate reverence arose more from his attractive and likeable character, than from any true perception of his greatness as a writer.

"This maiden sister seems really to have been a mature guardian angel to De Quincey. More than once, she said, she had 'put him out' when he had fallen asleep with his head on the table, and overturned a candle on his papers. She used to buy his apparel for him piecemeal: now a pair of socks, now a pair of boots, now a coat, now a waistcoat—never a whole suit. Once she had to order for him a kind

of military cloak lined with red. When he had an engagement to dine out, she had to keep him up to it, and to call for him afterwards, lest he should forget to come home at the hour fixed, as he was apt to get liveliest in the early hours, and to begin then to feel himself at home with his friends. In grateful appreciation of these services, he used sometimes to hire a carriage and drive her and her niece out to Lasswade to spend the day, and at other times he escorted them to the theatre.

"The greasy, crumpled, Scotch one-pound notes annoyed him. He did his best to smoothe and cleanse them before parting with them, and he washed and polished shillings up to their pristine brightness before he gave them away."

CHAPTER XIX.

CRITICISMS AND CHARACTERISTICS.

IN the "Westminster Review" for April 1854, there appeared an elaborate article on De Quincey, which has often been referred to as faithfully presenting his characteristics. But of this article we find so acute a critic as Nathaniel Hawthorne expressing himself with some dissatisfaction in a letter to his friend, Mr. J. T. Fields, and founding on it a general remark somewhat to the discredit of English readers and English critics. He says:—"Did you read the article on your friend De Quincey in the last 'Westminster'? It was written by M—— of this city [London], who was in America a year or two ago. The article is pretty well, *but does nothing like adequate justice to De Quincey; and, in fact, no Englishman cares a pin for him. We are ten times as good readers and critics as they.*" What prize we should have had if Hawthorne had been tempted to give us his views on so unique a combination of qualities as are found in De Quincey! It was a subject he would have delighted in—once

begun to write; for we know that he was a constant and careful student of De Quincey's writings, and was not at all likely to commit himself to such an opinion as that just quoted without having cautiously satisfied himself, and viewed the matter in its many bearings. He was as little of the literary enthusiast, prone to be caught by momentary and inadequate impressions, as well could be. One thing we are quite sure of. He would not have been guilty of the mistake some critics of note have recently fallen into, and have written of De Quincey as though he were a dreamer and a writer of "impassioned prose" only. To take up this view of De Quincey, is altogether to shirk the literary problem he presents, misleading those who may listen or be influenced; and the proceeding is pardonable only on the supposition that the reviewer had been guilty of what is vulgarly supposed to be a necessary qualification of his class —the faculty of forming a conclusive opinion "*without having read your author.*" To bring down from a bookshelf the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," and the first volume of the "Autobiographic Sketches," and read them in that wholly unreceptive and coldly critical mood which cannot even temporarily condescend to sympathy with the play of phantasy and eccentric sentiment, and then proceed to write as though they exhausted the whole of De Quincey's works, certainly comes very close to the perilous experiment of which reviewers are proverbially said to be the performers. This is exactly one of the cases in which "not to sympathise, is not to understand." In the instance of the most consequence in which we see a decided tendency in

this way, we find the writer making such astounding assertions as these :—

"Language, according to the common phrase, is the dress of thought; and that dress is the best, according to modern canons of taste, which attracts least attention from its wearer. De Quincey scorns this sneaking maxim of prudence, and boldly challenges our admiration by appearing in *the richest colouring that can be got out of the dictionary.* His language deserves a commendation sometimes bestowed by ladies on rich garments—that *it* is capable of standing up by *itself*. . . . One may fancy that if De Quincey's language were emptied of all meaning whatever, the mere sound of the words would move us, as the lovely word 'Mesopotamia' moved Whitefield's hearer.

"He appeals to our terror of the infinite . . . he paints vast perspectives, opening in long succession, till we grow dizzy in the contemplation. The cadence of his style suggests sounds echoing each other, and growing gradually fainter, till they die away into absolute distance. . . . Melancholy, and an awe-stricken sense of the vast and vague, are the emotions which he communicates with the greatest power; though the melancholy is too dreamy to deserve the name of passion, and the terror of the infinite is not explicitly connected *with any religious emotion.* It is a proof of the fineness of his taste that he scarcely ever falls into bombast; we tremble at his audacity in accumulating gorgeous phrases, but we confess that he is *justified in the result.*"

And though, as this writer holds, he was "*utterly incapable of concentration,*" yet "his very creditable

desire for lucidity of expression makes him nervously anxious to avoid any complexity of thought. . . . He insists upon putting each proposition separately, smoothing them out elaborately, till not a wrinkle disturbs their uniform surface, and then presenting each of them for our acceptance with a placid smile."

But it is surely a wrong-headed and somewhat indelicate way of illustrating the position, to say that Keats' "Ode to the Nightingale" surpasses, though it resembles, some of De Quincey's finest passages; and that the "Hyperion" might have been "translated into prose, as a fitting companion for some of the earlier dreams." And then succeeds a delicate compliment to Keats and De Quincey alike:—"He does not seem to have been liable to any worse imputations than that of *excessive inability for anything beyond spinning gorgeous phraseology*. . . . The goodness of his character diminishes the interest of his story." Then follows a very forced and illegitimate contrast of De Quincey with Rousseau, and a summing up thus:—"In a life of seventy-three years De Quincey read extensively, and thought deeply by fits, ate an enormous quantity of opium, wrote a few pages which revealed new capacities in the language, and provided a good deal of respectable padding for magazines."*

At one place, however, the critic ventures on a definite question:—"And what would Taylor, or Browne, or De Quincey himself have done, had *they*

* The italics in the extracts are in each case ours, and not the author's.—ED.

wanted to write down the project of Wood's halfpence in Ireland? Much as a king in his coronation robes, compelled to lead a forlorn hope up the scaling ladders."

And to this question we would, in the first instance, reply *in the Scottish way*, by asking another —one or two others—to which, if this writing should ever have the privilege of coming under the critic's eye, we beg that he will be honest enough and manly enough to find a way of giving a distinct answer:— Did he ever read De Quincey's "most masterly" (these are Wordsworth's words) appendix to the "Convention of Cintra" pamphlet? Did he ever read "Klosterheim"? Did he ever really read the "Templar's Dialogues on Political Economy"? Did he ever read the article on "Casuistry," the essay on "Milton *versus* Southey and Landor," or the biographies of Goethe and Schiller from the "Encyclopædia Britannica"—more especially the passage in the former dealing with Goethe's childish scepticism; and does he hold the criticism, here given as exhaustive, [illegible] applies to them? His answer, whatever it may take, will bring his criticism to some more definite application, and enable those who pay attention to such things to estimate its real worth. Other critics, who *have* read these, have an idea that the man who wrote them might have come nearer to the needed style for "Wood's halfpence" than might be believed by some, apparently,—if he had been put under the necessity of applying himself to such work. At all events, one thing was impossible to him—the slips, the blunders, the sole-

cisms which so pervade this article, professedly "disposing of" De Quincey, that the slightest excerpts cannot be made from it without one's being compelled, in half shame and regret, to light upon them, and to expose them.

Our purpose in presenting this small specimen of English criticism is to show, as well as we could in little space, how much ground there was for Hawthorne's deliverance, and how easy it was for Americans to outstrip some of us as readers and as critics of De Quincey, on the appreciative side at all events. Certainly, the contrast between Hawthorne's estimate and that of this English critic is very marked indeed. But when Mr. Hawthorne said that no Englishman "cared a pin for De Quincey," he allowed himself to fall into an extreme statement. De Quincey has always had careful and sympathetic readers here as in America; and one of them, in 1861, contributed to the *Quarterly Review* an article in which we find such passages as these, making us wonder how two critics could reach conclusions so different, even opposed, as these are to those quoted:—

"The position of De Quincey in the literature of the present day is remarkable. We might search in vain for a writer who, with equal powers, has made an equally slight impression upon the general public. His style is superb; his powers of reasoning are unsurpassed; his imagination is warm and brilliant, and his humour both masculine and delicate. Yet, with this singular combination of gifts, he is comparatively little known outside of that small circle of men who love literature for its own sake, which, in

proportion to the population, is not an increasing class. . . . That his essays are not, in general, upon popular subjects, is, of course, one element in the case; although they only require to be read to show how easily a man of genius can lubricate the gravest topics by his own overflowing humour, without making the slightest approximation to either flippancy or coarseness. . . . The extraordinary compass and unique beauty of his diction, accommodating itself without an effort to the highest flights of imagination, to the minutest subtleties of reasoning, and to the gayest vagaries of humour, are by themselves, indeed, a sure pledge of a long, if not undying, reputation. . . . A great master of English composition; a critic of uncommon delicacy; an honest, unflinching investigator of received opinions; a philosophic enquirer, second only to his first and sole hero, De Quincey has departed from us full of years, and l[illegible] no successor to his rank. The exquisite finish of his style, with the scholastic rigour of his logic, form a combination which cent[illegible] may never reproduce, but which every [illegible] should study as one of the marvels o[illegible] literature."

We now proceed in our endeavour to bring out some of De Quincey's more prominent traits, as exhibited in his writings.

And the first thing we note as bringing almost incompatible qualities into combination, and exhibiting them in free exercise, is the logical or quantitative faculty working alongside the dreaming, or purely abstractive faculty, without sense of discord. Whilst De Quincey was in the very crisis of his opium

dreams, his mind could raise itself to interest in Ricardo, and find a kind of escape from his intensest sufferings there. De Quincey thus appeals directly to two orders of mind and sympathy, between whom there is little in common—no meeting-point or kindred aim. This fact alone should suffice to arrest hasty and precipitate judgments. The wide reach of his intellectual sympathies, which, at one moment, in spite of physical and mental prostration, enabled him to hold out one hand to Ricardo, while with the other he grasped that of Wordsworth, would alone suffice to announce a phenomenon worthy of the most careful and exhaustive examination. What must indeed surprise those who devote themselves to a laborious study of De Quincey, is the exact and persistent hold he has upon the laws of practical life and its conduct, and the casuistry that lies behind them; and also his power to rise to the most mystical and transcendent elements. Sometimes, his imagination and his analytic intellect seem absolutely to fall apart from each other, and to run each on its own way in separate courses; but a pervading sentiment, touched more or less by a radiant, if not powerful, humour, catches at the skirts of each, and brings them once more into kindly union. Take, for instance, the passage, which is thrown into the midst of his "Opium Confessions," on the outs and ins of the life of that poor London lawyer, in whose house he had found a lodging, and the premature but clear conception that the boy is represented as having of the whole structure of that order of life, and read it alongside of that wondrous illustration of the increased value of production by the beaver hat, in the

"Templar's Dialogues on Political Economy." It has been well said:—

"It is a very remarkable fact, and one to which in forming any estimate of the author of whom we treat great importance is to be attached, that he was the first, or among the first, to hail the rising, in quarters of the literary heaven so widely apart, and with such an antithetic diversity of radiance, of two such stars as Wordsworth and Ricardo. The light of Ricardo is, perhaps in every sense, good and bad, the driest in English literature; the general intellect even of practical England turns away from it. Wordsworth is, of all poets, the furthest removed from the practical world: he is the listener to the voice of the winds, the watcher of the wreathing of the clouds: he can drink a tender and intense pleasure from the waving of the little flower, and from the form of its star-shaped shadow; he can even enter, by impressible delicacy of poetic sympathy, into the feelings which his own creative power imparts, and with that little flower 'conscious of half the pleasure that it gives;' from him, too, the general intellect of practical England, as proved in the case of Arnold, turns away dissatisfied. In the range of De Quincey's sympathies—and the sympathies are the voices or the ministers of the powers, the leaves by which the plant drinks in the air of heaven—there was compass for both."

And it is a point worth emphasising, again, that even in the driest of sciences his imagination and personal influence prevailed. Readers in general would not be very apt to suppose that it was possible for Political Economy to become charged

with the finest biographical suggestions. It is a dry and abstract study. Everything seems to shrink into an unclothed anatomy in its atmosphere. De Quincey himself confesses it, and nowhere with more directness than in these various notes, in which he disposed of Mr. Malthus, and his confused ideas on the "Measure of Value." A few passages from one of these notes we give in the Appendix, to show how clear De Quincey could be in style when dealing with the most abstruse and abstract matters. But it is probable that he would never have attempted anything formal and complete in Political Economy, had it not been for a strong personal attachment, founded, however, on scientific sympathy alone. For Mr. Ricardo, his respect and gratitude—his reverence even—were unstinted. Many other calls had made it impossible for him to complete a work which he had intended to submit to Mr. Ricardo, and which lay unfinished at Mr. Ricardo's death. De Quincey's keenest sorrow was awakened, because he had lost the opportunity of a long-anticipated privilege, and had foregone a chance of affording pleasure to one who had so greatly benefitted him. What he had regarded as a duty to the living, now became a still more incumbent duty to the dead. It was under such impelling sanctions that he wrote his "Templars' Dialogues," and, later, his "Political Economy," which, when viewed in the light of these biographical facts, take on a new colour, and breathe even a sympathetic interest. On the death of Mr. Ricardo in 1823, De Quincey wrote in the "London Magazine" a short article, in which he gave expression to these feelings. He titles it, "The

Services of Mr. Ricardo to the Science of Political Economy," and writes thus:—

"I do not remember that any public event of our own times has touched me so nearly, or so much with the feelings belonging to a private affliction, as the death of Mr. Ricardo. To me in some sense it was a private affliction, and no doubt to all others who knew and honoured his extraordinary talents. For great intellectual merit, wherever it has been steadily contemplated, cannot but conciliate some personal regard; and, for my part, I acknowledge that, abstracting altogether from the use to which a man of splendid endowments may apply them—or even supposing the case that he should deliberately apply them to a bad one—I could no more on that account withhold my good wishes and affection from his person, than, under any consideration of their terrific attributes, I could forbear to admire the power and the beauty of the serpent or the panther. Simply on its own account, and without further question, a great intellect challenges, as of right, not merely an interest of admiration—in common with all other exhibitions of power and magnificence—but also an interest of human love, and (where that is necessary) a spirit of tenderness to its aberrations. Mr. Ricardo, however, stood in no need of a partial or indulgent privilege; his privilege of intellect had a comprehensive sanction from all the purposes to which he applied it in the course of his public life: in or out of Parliament, as a senator, or as an author, he was known and honoured as a public benefactor. Though connected myself by private friendship with persons of the political party hostile to his, I heard amongst them all but one

language of respect for his public conduct. Those who stood neutral to all parties, remarked that Mr. Ricardo's voice—though heard too seldom for the wishes of the enlightened part of the nation—was never raised with emphasis upon any question lying out of the province in which he reigned as the paramount authority, except upon such as seemed to affect some great interest of liberty or religious toleration. And, wherever a discussion arose which transcended the level of temporary or local politics (as that, for example, upon corporal punishments), the weight of authority, which mere blank ability had obtained for him in the House of Commons, was sure to be thrown into that view of the case which upheld the dignity of human nature. Participating most cordially in these feelings of reverence for Mr. Ricardo's political character, I had, besides, a sorrow not unmixed with self-reproach, arising out of some considerations more immediately personal to myself. In August and September 1821, wrote 'The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater;' and in the course of this little work I took occasion to express my obligations, as a student of Political Economy, to Mr. Ricardo's 'Principles' of that science. For this, as for some other passages, I was justly* attacked by an able and liberal critic in the 'Edinburgh Review'—as for so

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* Not so, however, let me say in passing, for three supposed instances of affected doubt—in all of which my doubts were, and are at this moment, very sincere and unaffected; and in one of them, at least, I am assured by those of whom I have since inquired, that my reviewer is mistaken. As another point, which, if left unnoticed, might affect something more important to myself than the credit of my taste or judgment, let me in-

many absurd irrelevancies: in that situation no doubt they were so; and of this, in spite of the haste in which I had written the greater part of the book, I was fully aware. However, as they said no more than what was true, I was glad to take that, or any occasion which I could invent, for offering my public testimony of gratitude to Mr. Ricardo. The truth is, I thought that something might occur to intercept any more appropriate mode of conveying my homage to Mr. Ricardo's ear, which should else more naturally have been expressed in a direct work on Political Economy. This fear was at length realised—not in the way I had apprehended, viz., by my own death, but by Mr. Ricardo's. And now, therefore, I felt happy that, at whatever price of good taste, I had in some imperfect way made known my sense of his high pretensions—although, unfortunately, I had given him no means of judging whether my applause were of any value. For during the interval between September 1821 and Mr. Ricardo's death in September 1823, I had found no leisure for completing my work on Political Economy; on that account I had forborne to use the means of introduction to Mr. Ricardo, which I commanded through my private connections, or simply as a man of letters: and in some measure, therefore, I ow

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form my reviewer that, when he traces an incident which I have recorded most faithfully about a Malay to a tale of Mr. Hogg's, he makes me indebted to a book which I never saw. In saying this, I mean no disrespect to Mr. Hogg; on the contrary, I am sorry that I have never seen it; for I have a great admiration for Mr. Hogg's genius, and have had the honour of his personal acquaintance for the last ten years."

it to my own neglect—that I had for ever lost the opportunity of benefitting by Mr. Ricardo's conversation, or bringing under his review such new speculations of mine in Political Economy as in any point modified his own doctrines—whether as corrections of supposed oversights, or derivations of the same truth from a higher principle, as further illustrating a proof of any theory which he might have insufficiently developed, or simply in the way of supplement to his known and voluntary omissions. All this I should have done with the utmost fearlessness of giving offence, and not for a moment believing that Mr. Ricardo would have regarded anything in the light of an undue liberty, which in the remotest degree might seem to affect the interests of a science so eminently indebted to himself. In reality, candour may be presumed in a man of first-rate understanding, not merely as a moral quality, but almost as a part of his intellectual constitution *per se;* a spacious and commanding intellect being magnanimous in a manner *suo jure*, even though it should have the misfortune to be allied with a perverse or irritable temper. On this consideration I would gladly have submitted to the review of Mr. Ricardo, as indisputably the first of critics in this department, rather than to any other person, my own review of himself. I regret, also, [redacted]ave forfeited the opportunity of perhaps giving [redacted] to Mr. Ricardo, by liberating him from a few [redacted]sentations, and placing his vindication upon a [redacted]basis even than that which he has chosen. In [redacted]pect I enjoy an advantage for such a service, and [redacted]n general for the polemical part of Political Economy, which Mr. Ricardo did not. The course of my studies

has led me to cultivate the scholastic logic. Mr. Ricardo had obviously neglected it. Confiding in his own conscious strength, and no doubt participating in the common error of modern times as to the value of artificial logic, he has taken for granted that the Aristotelian forms, and the exquisite science of distinctions matured by the subtlety of the Schoolmen, can achieve nothing in substance which is beyond the power of mere sound good sense and robust faculties of reasoning; or at most can only attain the same end with a little more speed and adroitness. But this is a great error; and it was an ill day for the human understanding when Lord Bacon gave his countenance to a notion, which his own exclusive study of one department in philosophy could alone have suggested. Distinctions previously examined —probed—and accurately bounded, together with a terminology previously established, are the crutches on which all minds—the weakest and the strongest—must alike depend in many cases of perplexity: from pure neglect of such aids, which are to the unassisted understanding what weapons are to the unarmed human strength, as tools and machinery to the naked hand of art, do many branches of knowledge at this day languish amongst those which are independent of experiment.

"As the best consolation to myself for the lo[illegible] tunities with which I have here reproached my[illegible] as the best means of doing honour to the m[illegible] Mr. Ricardo, I shall now endeavour to spread t[illegible] ledge of what he has performed in Political E[illegible] To do this in the plainest and most effectual manner, I shall abstain from introducing any opinions peculiar to

myself, excepting only when they may be necessary for the defence of Mr. Ricardo against objections which have obtained currency from the celebrity of their authors, or in the few cases where they may be called for by the errors (as I suppose them to be) even of Mr. Ricardo. In using this language I do not fear to be taxed with arrogance: we of this day stand upon the shoulders of our predecessors; and that I am able to detect any error in Mr. Ricardo, I owe, in most instances, to Mr. Ricardo himself."

It is this individual—this sympathetic—approach, which De Quincey takes to the driest topics, that gives him not only the originality but the fascination by which he holds the student, and leads him on and on, in spite of digression and sometimes an overweening love of scholastic logic and learned reference. It is not impossible that some may think his admiration of Mr. Ricardo too excessive—a kind of craze. We have quoted this article for the purpose of showing how the element of personal sympathy lit up even his scientific curiosities, enabling him to secure a wider audience than the dry scientific mind ever could, even for subjects strictly scientific. Mr. Minto is certainly right when he says:—

"Were De Quincey's writings the outcome of nothing more generally attractive than profound erudition, intellectual subtlety, and powers of copious expression, they would not have taken such a hold of the public interest. But he was not an arid philosopher, a modern Duns Scotus, or Thomas Aquinas. He tells us that he read 'German Metaphysicians, Latin Schoolmen, Thaumaturgic Platonists, and Religious Mystics;' but he tells

us also that at one time 'a tremendous hold was taken of his entire sensibilities by our own literature.' Though he 'well knew that his proper vocation was the exercise of the analytic understanding,' he spent perhaps the greater part of his time in the exercise of the imagination, taking profound delight in the sublime and more passionate poets, in 'the grand lamentations of "Samson Agonistes," or the great harmonies of the Satanic Speeches in "Paradise Regained."'

"During a considerable part of his time he was wrapt in his favourite studies, in works of the analytic understanding, of history, of imagination. But even in daily life, in intercourse with the world, his imagination seems to have been preternaturally active. He was a close observer of character, as we can see from his works, and from the testimony of those who knew him. But, as we also know from both sources, his imagination was constantly active in shaping his surroundings into objects of refined pleasure, ranging through many varieties of grave and gay. He applied this transfiguring process to the incidents of his own life—not inventing romantic or comical incidents, but dwelling upon certain features of what really took place, and investing them with lofty, tender, or humorous imagery. So with his friends and casual acquaintances. He was sufficiently observant of what they really did and said, was remarkably acute in divining what passed in their minds, and felt the disagreeable as well as the agreeable points of their character; but he had the power of abstracting from the disagreeable circumstances. He fixed his imagination upon the agreeable side of an acquaintance, and

transmuted the mixed handiwork of nature into a pure object of æsthetic pleasure."*

All this is profoundedly true; but facts go a step further still. In the case of Mr. Ricardo, a purely intellectual relationship is, by the power of De Quincey's individualising imagination, transformed into a relationship of sympathy, as genuine as though it had been based upon long and intimate personal association.

Humour, in combination with two such modes of intellectual sympathy as are signified by the names of Wordsworth and Ricardo, is one of the most remarkable phenomena on record. But we find it in De Quincey—sometimes, it is true, allying itself too easily with what is merely secondary and fantastic, so that if it is to blame for not a little of his digressiveness, still it imparts to everything he does a bouquet, a flavour, an after-taste which is distinctly his own. If this ever-present and kindly humour—this keen sense of the ludicrous and the salient disparities of life—saved him from pedantry, it did so only by making absolutely necessary for him a recurrent contact with real life itself. Even during the London period, when he was still in the throes of opium, does he not make record of that impulse under which, in opposition to the general experience of opium-eaters, he was impelled to mingle with the Saturday-night crowds in the more frequented parts of London? And this Saturday-night wandering, he says, actually outweighed the attractions of the Opera, which then also took place on Saturday evenings.

"The pains of poverty I had lately seen too much

* Manual of English Prose Literature. W. Blackwood & Sons.

of," he confesses; "more than I wished to remember; but the pleasures of the poor, their consolations of spirit, and their reposes from bodily toil, can never become oppressive to contemplate. Now Saturday night is the season for the chief, regular, and periodic return of rest to the poor. In this point, the most hostile sects unite, and acknowledge a common link of brotherhood: almost all Christendom rests from its labours. It is a rest introductory to another rest, and divided by a whole day and two nights from the renewal of toil. On this account, I feel always, on a Saturday night, as though I also were released from some yoke of labour, had some wages to receive, and some luxury of repose to enjoy. For the sake, therefore, of witnessing upon as large a scale as possible a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often, on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance, to all the markets and other parts of London to which the poor resort on a Saturday night for laying out their wages. Many a family party, consisting of a man, his wife, and sometimes one or two of his children, have I listened to, as they stood consulting on their ways and means, or the strength of their exchequer, or the price of household articles. Gradually I became familiar with their wishes, their difficulties, and their opinions. Sometimes there might be heard murmurs of discontent, but far oftener expressions on the countenance, or uttered in words, of patience, hope, and tranquillity. And, taken generally, I must say, that, in this point of view at least, the poor are far more philosophic than the rich—that they show a

more ready and cheerful submission to what they consider as irremediable evils or irreparable losses. Whenever I saw occasion, or could do it without appearing to be intrusive, I joined their parties, and gave my opinion upon the matter in discussion, which, if not always judicious, was always received indulgently. If wages were a little higher, or were expected to be so, or the quartern loaf a little lower, or it was reported that onions and butter were expected to fall, I was glad; yet, if the contrary were true, I drew from opium some means of consoling myself. For opium, like the bee that extracts its material indiscriminately from roses and from the soot of the chimneys, can overrule all feelings into a compliance with the master-key. Some of these rambles led me to great distances, for an opium-eater is too happy to observe the motion of time; and sometimes in my attempts to steer homewards upon nautical principles, by fixing my eye on the pole star, and seeking ambitiously for a north-west passage, instead of circumnavigating all the capes and headlands I had doubled in my outward voyage, I came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, such enigmatical entries, and such sphinx's riddles of streets without thoroughfares, as must, I conceive, baffle the audacity of porters, and confound the intellects of hackney-coachmen. I could almost have believed, at times, that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terræ incognitæ*, and doubted whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London. For all this, however, I paid a heavy price in distant years, when the human face tyrannised over my dreams, and the perplexities of my steps in London came back

and haunted my sleep, with the feeling of perplexities, moral or intellectual, that brought confusion to the reason or anguish or remorse to the conscience. Thus I have shown that opium does not of necessity produce inactivity or torpor, but that, on the contrary, it often led me into markets and theatres."

This forms, in our idea, one of the most remarkable passages in any literature, as revealing an utterly original cast of character. Now, it is precisely here that De Quincey parts company alike from Coleridge and from Wordsworth. Neither of them had humour, nor had either of them any trace of this passion for rude life, most often allied to humour. In the one, such a tendency would have been found inconsistent with the constant effort after framing a complete metaphysical system; in the other, it would have done much to disperse the wealth of meditative impression, gathered from daily but almost passive communion with nature. There is another friend of De Quincey, who, though in certain gifts he fell far below either of these great men, yet surpassed them in this combination of thought, sentiment, humour, and passion for life, and that is Professor Wilson, the record of whose complete comprehension of De Quincey and unaltering friendship for him remains as his record in this particular.

To De Quincey's keen sense of humour we mainly owe it also that, in spite of the amount of autobiographic writing he has given to the world, any attempt either to gather the exact facts of his life, or to penetrate his character, so as to find a reconciling point for very disparate tendencies, is unspeakably difficult. We trust we shall not be

misunderstood here. What we mean is, that along with his self-revelation ran the strictest reticence. He looks at himself very much as he would at another; and, as few men really respected more the "private rights" of others, even where fine insight might have fully revealed the secret that was half hidden from themselves, so he was in the intimate sense self-respecting. This led to the general observance of a rule in his autobiographic writing which may be shortly summed up thus: "I shall be honest, strictly honest, in all that I reveal, but I cannot reveal all; and I shall be conscientiously careful, first, not to touch loosely any facts where others are concerned, and, secondly, I shall be chary even of direct references to facts that are *personal* to myself. Considering the atmosphere in which my autobiographic writing must move, this would indeed be to impart to it a certain element of the ludicrous, and the outward interests would speedily come to conflict with, and to overshadow, the inner and truer interests with which I am concerned, and would wholly defeat my purpose." In a few instances, he may be said to have lapsed from his own principle, and in such a mass of autobiographic writing it would have been wonderful if he had not; but no one would have more readily admitted than he would, on deliberate consideration, that these were, strictly speaking, lapses. De Quincey, then, in general deals only with facts and experiences which had something of *universality;* he does not care for dates or persons save in so far as they are essential to the general path which he has resolved to follow. He himself, in that note to the editor of "Hogg's Instructor"

given on a former page, indicates this with masterly clearness and humour; and that very announcement might be taken as an illustration in little of his whole method—so far as he had a method—in his autobiographic writing. The isolated fact on which he founds is but a point of departure, but a pinnacle, so to say, from which he may leap into a freer sphere, the atmosphere of which is common to all who can be said to have lived up to a certain level of experience or self-observation. Hence the unconnectedness, the obtrusive digressions and rangings from date to date, the want of straightforwardness in the mere narrative, and the general disregard of those very elements which ought to be pre-eminent in biography proper. It seems as though he was quite as concerned to hide the connecting links of fact as to reveal the mental condition which obtained at the passing from one to the other. He sometimes seems to be half-hoaxing the reader; at any rate, from the curiosity which he is certain to excite in the minds of those who are disposed to seek satisfaction in coherent and exhaustive circumstantial relations, he is most certainly half-hoaxing *them.* The clearness of his memory for facts is so evident, that his abstinence is at once seen to be due to conscious and preconceived intention. For those who read in the spirit of sympathy and imaginative reverie, this is an endless source of gratification and delight; because the intimations are essentially suggestive of those higher imaginative links which, when apprehended, afford pleasure of a deeper kind than gatherings of mere facts and details could ever give, precisely as in private friendship

is your nearest friend who can divine your mood, penetrate the cause of your joy or your dejection, and can bring such comfort as is possible without the aid of words: by subtlest sympathy which cannot be defined you *understand* each other. De Quincey, then, reveals himself, but only indirectly and imaginatively; you do not gather his traits by the amount of facts or the relation of the facts which he gives you, but only by sympathetic insight into his way of using them. Thus only the privileged may really peep between the lines of his life as he has told it; he reveals himself by hint, by casual suggestion, but he hides himself as effectively from the critical and coldly unreceptive. Very cautious the wiser sort of critics will be in giving their *ipse dixit* on such elusive natures, lest it be found that they have been the victims of a joke that can be played even after death, and they be caught in the meshes of their own conceit, when they fancied they had found every stop of the pipe. And here truly is a triumph not so much of conscious ingenuity as of fine literary instinct. If it had not been for pressing necessity, as has been said, De Quincey had never written such works at all. His "Opium Confessions" raised a demand for such writing, and he could not afford to decline to answer to it; but his subtle perceptions of things and his rare humour enabled him at once thus effectively to conceal and to reveal himself; and not only to reveal "new capacities in the English language," but to add to English biographical writing a new possibility, and, we may almost say, a new principle.

In a recent number of the "Saturday Review," we

met with these words, which could hardly have been more apt if they had been expressly written to be set down in this place with reference to the effect of De Quincey's humour in some directions:—"To possess great humour is to live a good deal alone, in a world full of pathetic and laughable fancies. On the other hand, it is to have wide sympathies and tenderness; and the humourist will give freely of these treasures to the people about him, who, after all, can only in rare cases come near to him and understand him. Through part of life it consoles him, when it reveals the fantastic side of misfortunes and of crosses, and forces him to smile at the human weaknesses which torture while they tickle him."

All this perfectly suffices to account for the lack of outward completeness in these autobiographic sketches. But, since this incompleteness is due to a principle on which he consciously and consistently acted, we must not conclude from this merely that he could not therefore have written sustained memoirs had the duty been laid upon him. It is altogether a false and superficial inference which some critics have thus drawn. One of the most concentrated, severe, and sustained pieces of biography we have ever read is De Quincey's essay on Shakespeare from the "Encyclopædia Britannica." He tells us that it cost him "intense labour," and that the bulk of it was written three times over—which we can well believe. It is from work of this kind that inferences as to capacity for sustained labour and thought should be drawn, and not from "Reminiscences," in which confessedly the element of exhaustiveness is excluded by the very presence

of that erratic and half-poetic sentiment and turn for generalised experience, which imparts to these chapters their particular charm. Humour, in its freer phases, however, must always be discursive; it is alien to a stern and exact adherence to presupposed order and common logic; and the manner in which De Quincey could be at once humorous and logical constitutes him at least a writer *sui generis*.

We shall soon see that to this humour, besides, we owe in a large measure the patient forbearance, and the tolerant sympathy, which at first are apt to surprise and puzzle us in a character at once so keenly observant and exposed to all the impatience and irritability usually associated with overstrung nerves.

We have, then, in De Quincey, to start with, keen analytic intellect, along with delicate phantasy, sensibilities also keen, but exacting in their demand on the senses, and humour special and pervading, underlying a social instinct, imperious, and waiting on reactions. The combination seems as if in reality it would present us with something only *outré*, and *outré*, in one aspect, indeed it is. How much De Quincey owed to his love of the open air, and his capacity of complete social self-abandonment—qualities not often found in combination with these others—it would be hard to say; but that he did owe much to these, as we owe much to them, is as undoubted as that he was a great dreamer and a master of English style. He was able also to exercise a true sympathy with the lot of others,—to detect the compensations of life, and find the lesson that lies in them—as witness the comfort he draws from

poor Charles Lloyd's case, in that he suffered from no disease such as his. This patient, if not contented and cheerful, view of life, is so obtrusive indeed, as to give occasionally a tone of optimism to his writings, which is corrected only by specific occasions.

It is surely very noticeable, too, as being altogether unlike the usual impatience, irritability, and incapacity to detect the balancing advantages in everyday circumstances most characteristic of dreamers and those of overstrung nerves, that De Quincey should be content to find an advantage in the pressure put upon him by the periodical press, to which he had been forced by necessity to unite himself, and to set forth even the accruing disadvantages in humorous self-irony, glimmering, as it were, with dewdrops of pathos.

"Another circumstance of hardship," he says, on one occasion, prefacing a certain essay of his later years, "which entitles me to the special indulgence of the reader is, that, in this paper, I am writing against time. Many are the matches which I have had against Time in *my* time and in *his* time [*i.e.*, in Time's time]. And all such matches, writing or riding, are memorably unfair. Time, the meagre shadow, carries no weight at all, so what parity can there be in any contest with *him?* What does *he* know of anxiety, or liver-complaint, or income-tax, or of the vexations connected with the correcting of proofs for the press? Although, by the way, he *does* take upon himself, with his villanous scrawl, to correct all the fair proofs of nature. He sows canker into the heart of rose-buds, and writes wrinkles

(which are his odious attempts at pot-hooks), in the loveliest of female faces. No type so fair, but he fancies, in his miserable conceit, that he can improve it; no stereotype so fixed, but he will alter it; and, having spoiled one generation after another, he still persists in believing himself the universal amender and the ally of progress. Ah, that one might, if it were but for a day in a century, be indulged with the sight of Time forced into a personal incarnation, so as to be capable of personal insult—a cudgelling, for instance, or a ducking in a horse-pond. Or, again, that once in a century, were it but for a single summer's day, his corrected proofs might be liable to suppression by *revises*, such as I would furnish, down to the margin of which should run one perpetual iteration of *stet.*, *stet.;* everything that the hoary scoundrel had *deleted*, rosebuds or female bloom, beauty or power, grandeur or grace, being solemnly reinstated; and having the privilege of one day's secular resurrection, like the Arabian Phœnix, or any other memento of a power in things earthly, and in sublunary births, to mock and to defy the scythe of this crowned thief. . . . .

"Not that always and unconditionally it is an evil to be hurried in writing for the press. I doubt not that many a score of practised writers for the press, will have been self-observing enough to notice a phenomenon which I have many times noticed—viz., that hurry and severe compression from an instant summons that brooks no delay, have often a tendency to furnish the flint and steel for eliciting sudden scintillations of originality; sometimes in what regards the picturesque felicity of the phrase, some-

times in what regards the thought itself, or its illustrations. To *autoschediaze*, or improvise, is sometimes in effect to be forced into a consciousness of creative energies, that would else have slumbered through life. The same stimulation to the creative faculty occurs even more notoriously in musical improvisations; and all great executants on the organ have had reason to bemoan their inability to arrest these sudden felicities of impassioned combinations, and these flying arabesques of loveliest melody, which the magnetic inspiration of the moment has availed to excite;"—a point this on which he was so convinced that he elsewhere repeats it, with almost equal felicity.

As an instance of the kind of self-respect he often shows on critical occasions, we might well cite here the reason he gives for failing to apply to any of his wealthy friends for help during the period of his wanderings. It was not alone the fear of being delivered over to his guardians. He says frankly, "It may surprise a reader who has gone through the slight records of my life, to find me originally, as a boy, moving amongst the circles of the nobility, and now courting only those of intellectual people;" and he then proceeds to give the reason. It had gradually impressed itself on him that, if he sought the society of such people, he must attach himself to them, occupy a doubtful position, lay himself open to the charge of sycophancy, &c. &c. "Every way, I saw," he goes on to say, "that my own dignity—which above all things, a man should scrupulously maintain—required that I should no longer go into any circles where I did not stand on my

own native footing—*propria jure.* What had been abundantly right for me as a boy, ceased to be right for me when I ceased to be a boy."

It was out of the elements of character which we here see at work—expressly conveying themselves into literature—that De Quincey's quick social sympathies sprang; for though he was, in some respects, intellectually an egotist, a solitary, a sentimentalist, he was in no sense morally so.

Nothing, indeed, could be further from a true criticism of De Quincey than to speak of him as habitually grave, shy, and bookish, and so given up to speculative and half-morbid brooding, as to have no liking for the freer play of the social feelings. His case, indeed, was the very opposite. One of the most striking things about him was this—that a man who seemed to have, in many ways, added to a natural predisposition to solitude, artificial bars to cheerful and lively social intercourse, was yet, among congenial companions, the freest and most spontaneous. He even confesses to a childish love of fun, of pure nonsense. "Both Lamb and myself," he says, "had a furious love for nonsense—head-long nonsense. Excepting Professor Wilson, I have known nobody who had the same passion to the same extent." And this suggests the remark, that the life-long friendship between Wilson and De Quincey could hardly have maintained its close and intimate character, if both had not possessed qualities which are not popularly accorded to them. Wilson is too much regarded as the boon companion—blessed above most men with good spirits, the rollicking creator of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," *par excellence:*

De Quincey too much as the dreamer of the "Confessions" and "Suspiria." The two nevertheless had much in common; and their meeting points, in one respect, were the extreme developments of the tendencies not commonly attributed to them. Wilson had a vein of dreamy, pastoral, meditative melancholy, as is abundantly seen in his poems, "The Isle of Palms" more especially, and also in some of his prose stories; while De Quincey's humour, drollery, and effervescent wit—shining the brighter by reaction from the habitual reverie to which he was tempted—indicate rich sympathies, and capabilities of entering into the ways of simple and untutored natures, and conciliating them. Over and above these things, and bringing, as it were, their divergent aspects into harmony, was an innocently Bohemian propensity—if we may use the word, without seeming to compromise the men we are dealing with more than there is need for. What we mean simply is, that both men, along with a remarkable purity and elevation of moral character, allied to the finest sensibilities, loved to be singular—to run somewhat aslant the ordinary conventionalities of life, though not to dash athwart them of *malice prepense* and by rebellion, which they never did; and by a certain "personal fascination" to justify themselves in the eyes even of those who, in any other case, would have been disposed seriously to find fault. The reason was that in both, combined with vast culture and powers of thought trained to the nimblest service, there was a constant, though wholly unaffected, hankering for contact with life in its simpler and more primitive forms; and a love unbounded for naïve and un-

hampered expression of certain orders of feeling. In all such cases there must necessarily be much that will suggest rough nature in the lump, but the feeling is absolutely alien from Rousseauism, which is intolerant of rough nature in spite of its pretension to simplicity, being intent, after all, on the analysis of artificial, mixed, and prurient experiences. Hence the Philistinish absurdity, as we have already hinted, of any — the most remote — suggestion of Rousseau and De Quincey, and the comparison of the one with the other—a thing that no man would ever dream of, but for the very exterior accident that they both wrote "Confessions." Beneath Wilson's rollicking, and, as it has been rather *uncritically* called, Rabelaisian fun, what simplicity, as of unconscious, childlike truthfulness; beneath De Quincey's excess of refinement, fantastic subtlety, and over-sharpened sensibility, what veins of natural, uncorrupted impulse? All readers of the "Autobiographic Sketches" will remember that truly characteristic picture of the Westmoreland "Sales," as they were termed, at many of which, as De Quincey tells us, he attended in his earlier days in Grasmere, admiring the simplicity and unconsciousness of the people. He deeply regretted that it was owing to the presence there of "Gentlemen" from a great city that he first heard rude jests, which brought a blush of shame to cheeks on which before "only a little rosy confusion at most" had ever been awakened by attendance at such meetings— where "the social benevolence, the innocent mirth, and the neighbourly kindness of the people, most

delightfully expanded and expressed themselves with the least reserve."

It is in these traits that we may find the source of a life-long friendship, which it would be really difficult to account for on the ordinary constructions of the characters of the two men. And it is at once surprising and consistent with the view we have taken, that Wilson in the representation of his friend in the "Noctes Ambrosianæ" should have shown so much care to keep in reserve any hint of the deeper relationship on which their alliance rested. Had he done so, the illusion had been weakened, the whole spirit of the "Noctes" indeed had been destroyed by the perpetual recurrence of false notes. He had to content himself, if he ventured to introduce the Opium-Eater at all, to keep him on a plane consistent with the general tone—the loud outbreaks of the Shepherd, the chaff of Tickler, and Wilson's own somewhat over-done jocosity. And hence it is that the imitation of De Quincey's conversation is so readily admitted on all hands to be inadequate. Wilson had to follow the form, but deny himself access to certain modes of feeling on De Quincey's part which were necessary to fill up and to interpret the form, even though he himself was deeply in sympathy with these. It is a one-sided De Quincey we have here; as it is, in one aspect, a one-sided Wilson. So that these sentences, which recently appeared in a London weekly, in reviewing Mr. Skelton's "Comedy of the Noctes," are not quite wide of the mark:—"There is a body of truest humour in the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ,' and this we say, though

believe that Wilson had not quite the spontaneity of rollicking Rabelaisian fun that he is credited with by his disciples. The truth is, the 'Noctes' recurrently pass into the merest manufacture and word-spinning, simply because Wilson would allow himself to be tempted into veins, and to deal with subjects, which disclosed the play of *sentiments* and *moods*, strictly speaking, alien altogether from that form of fun. Why, the very introduction of Thomas de Quincey, though it served very well as a temporary expedient, was distinctly a false note, betraying at every turn the emergence of a sympathy with a side of De Quincey's nature, *i.e.*, the dreamy side, which, to a really sensitive reader, makes the Shepherd's outbreaks too often grate and jar somehow like a false note. No, no; Wilson was a humorist, but in the 'Noctes' he was beguiled into touching strings that snapped under his heavy touch, and his hand on the tenser strings are thereafter seen to be less firm for a while. Still, he has the *unique* gift of going on, as though there were no disco[illegible], as though everything came to him with equal relish, and demanded, as it received, equal expression. In spite of the greatness of the 'Noctes,' viewed in one aspect, Wilson was greater than them; but then the effort to sustain them in no slight degree confirmed his discursiveness, his brilliant and sometimes erratic demonstrations."

One who was well acquainted with the gatherings from which Wilson drew his suggestions for the *Noctes*, thus speaks of De Quincey's part in them:—

"De Quincey wound along through all the upper his own quiet, deep current of philosophical and

poetic imaginings, tinged with that soft shade which overlies all his better converse as well as writing, and reminds you of his favourite words—

> 'The grace of forest charms decayed,
> And pastoral melancholy.'"

Two of the greatest poets of our own day—poets who have in a remarkable degree combined sincere self-analysis with nice dramatic presentation—agree in regarding the need of reactionary escape from solitude to society, of which we have spoken, as in some very special and subtle way indicating poetic sensibility and power. Mr. Matthew Arnold, in that graceful poem, in which, more exhaustively than elsewhere, he has summed up the special moral and intellectual burdens of the time, and his own relations to them, has this verse:—

> "Ah, two desires toss about
> The poet's feverish blood!—
> One drives him to the world without,
> And one to solitude."

Mr. Robert Browning, again, under the phantasy of "Parting at Morning," significantly presents us with the following as a complete poem:—

> "Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
> And the sun looked over the mountain's rim;
> And straight was a path of gold for him,
> And the need of a world of men for me."

And, assuredly, De Quincey, in the need that fell upon him, in the reaction, alike for contact with nature and the refreshment of solitude and for the stimulus of social intercourse, showed some [illegible] of the poetic quality, and from it derived an inde[illegible]

able consistency and balance of character—that keen sympathy and ready imagination alongside of quiet patience and discreet toleration, which is utterly alien from the ordinary conception of him as a mere dreamer.

Over-exalted sensibility does not generally coexist with wide and keenly individual sympathies: the reverse indeed. If the reader recalls to mind Swift, or Sterne, or Rousseau, he will at once perceive what is meant. Even the mildly-sustained sympathetic impulses in Cowper owed much to accidental but exceptionally happy associations of a domestic kind, and would undoubtedly, but for these, have passed into a diseased and perverted egotism, intensified by the gloomy theological atmosphere into which at intervals he wandered, as if under the dictate of some relentless fate. In De Quincey, the nervous irritation which, as he says, "travelled rapidly over the disk of his life," lifted or was held in suspense for a brief space, when he could relieve himself from morbid preoccupations, by the presentment of striking characters or situations which called his sympathies and his humour into play. No more perfect instance of this could be cited than the picture he has given us of those hours of escape from self-communion during his residence in Grasmere, when at nightfall he would sally forth, and engage his imagination in tracing out the course of the evening through its household hieroglyphics from the windows which he passed or saw; or his confession of some kind of compulsion leading him to fraternise with the Spanish-Galway gipsies [illegible]reen; or his patient listening to the long-[illegible]ns of the beggars at Lasswade, of which

his daughter has humorously told us. We even see some trace of it in the fun which, in later years, he takes out of that Saturday-night search for a stationer's shop, and his finding one—"the last rose of summer"—still open, to enable him to gratify himself by finishing a letter to his daughter. Nay, it may be that something was gained to this side of his nature under the results of these simplicities and imprudences, which led him several times amongst poorer and less fastidious people, in whom he most often found good points in spite of his own fastidiousness in certain respects. At all events, a remarkable humour and observant patience go along with his exalted sensibilities; supporting his keen and always kindly interest in the commonplace people about him as well as his generally kindly interest in the distinguished people he had met—a point this which suggests a remarkable contradiction in a certain unsympathetic writer, when she in one breath condemns De Quincey for visionary helplessness and diseased introspection, and comments severely on his proclivities to gossip, &c.' This same writer, we may remark by the way, here shows, in spite of her rare endowments, a significant lack of discernment or subtlety of analysis when she discredits his power of will, as having been exhausted in his earliest struggles with opium, and yet admits that in his later years he "abstained, or almost abstained," under the necessity of fortune—(a mistake, as we have seen, for in his later years no necessity such as this implies lay upon him even to pen a line). For critical discernment, this is about equal to [redacted] sage deliverance, sagely repeated, that [redacted] "wanted heart"—the existence of a h[redacted]

neous, unaffected, *boyish* good-heartedness being evident on every page of his writings, and fully attested in detail by his memoir; while she would actually seem to credit him with subtlety, and delicate discernment of the *nuances* of thought and imagination—in all of which, in any true and distinguishing sense, Lord Macaulay was as signally deficient as he was signally blessed with honest open English goodness of heart.*

We meanwhile return to our proper subject, from such one-sided pretence of characterisation, to say, that it was mainly by means of these links binding him to common interests and sympathies—links which opium never cancelled, or even greatly weakened—that De Quincey saved himself from lapsing into a life purely artificial, morbid, and helpless. The more credit to him that he did so, though the critical puzzle of his character is increased. One side of his nature, we have all along freely admitted, constantly tended that way, committing him to solitude, to constant reverie, to complete prostration under opium, to final and irrevocable relaxation of the will. This tendency to real life it was, declaring itself recurrently and with great strength, which chiefly enabled him to persevere in exercise, and force himself, as he says, into companionship with his fellow-men; and these two things did more to aid his final escape from opium than any other two causes put together. That is a poor analysis which would acknowledge a result, and yet

* And so this lady, accredited as a critic far above her deserts, blunders in the most of the cases of the great men she has tried to focus and to photograph, unless, indeed, where direct fact and gossip plentifully existed for her guidance as to traits.

remove to a background the elements of character that made it possible; and this is precisely what has been done in the case of certain critics who have dealt, as they thought, severely by Thomas de Quincey. We have from first to last acknowledged frankly his weaknesses, his lack of practical power in certain respects; but the puzzle of his character rests precisely here—that in combination with dreamy abstraction, helplessness, and over-sensibility amounting to disease, there should have existed great powers of observation, sympathy, humour, self-possession, dignity, and courtesy of manner; and it is no ungracious or ungrateful thing to say, that we have found but little help to understanding it from such critics as these. Yet we humbly think it is worth being studied and understood, if it possesses any such interest at all as would tempt one to write an *article* upon it.

In spite of such writing as we have here reprobated, it is only when such elements of character are recognised, and when a sense of the complexity and difficulty which they present leads on to a suspense of dogmatism and a mood of sympathy, that we can possibly find any real meaning in such passages as the following:—

"I, whose disease it was to meditate too much and to observe too little, and who, upon my first entrance at college, was nearly falling into a deep melancholy, from brooding too much on the sufferings I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of these tendencies in my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them. I was, indeed, like a person who, according to the old Pagan legend, had entered the cave of Trophonius; and *the remedies I sought were to fo*[illegible]

myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon subtleties of philosophic speculation. *But for these remedies I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy.* In after years, however, when my cheerfulness was more fully re-established, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. At that time, I often fell into such reveries after taking opium; and many a time it has happened to me on a summer night—when I have been seated at an open window, from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could at the same time command a view of some great town standing at a different radius of my circular prospect, but at nearly the same distance—that from sunset to sunrise, all through the hours of night, I have continued motionless, as if frozen, without consciousness of myself as of an object any way distinct from the multiform scene which I contemplated from above. Such a scene in all its elements was not unfrequently realised for me on the gentle eminence of Everton. Obliquely to the left lay the many-languaged town of Liverpool; obliquely to the right, the multitudinous sea. The scene itself was somewhat typical of what took place in such a reverie. The town of Liverpool represented the earth, with its sorrows and its graves left behind, yet not out of sight, nor wholly forgotten. The ocean, in everlasting but gentle agitation, yet brooded over by dovelike calm, might not unfitly typify the mind, and the mood which then swayed it. For it seemed to me as if then first I stood at a distance, aloof from the uproar of life; as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife, were suspended; a respite were granted from the secret burdens of the

heart; some sabbath of repose; some resting from human labours. Here were the hopes which blossom in the paths of life, reconciled with the peace which is in the grave; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a halcyon calm; tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms; infinite activities, infinite repose."

The wholly abnormal cast of his idiosyncrasy on one side is seen in the exceptional effects which opium produced upon him. Instead of the dreamy depression and sense of blankness which are generally experienced under its effects in the first instance, he acknowledges only a sensation of delight; instead of compelling him to a dreamy solitude, it stimulated him to a more active and lively interest in the lot of others. When not used in great excess, it steadied his thoughts and concentrated them; for it is very noticeable, that in the periods when he chiefly complains of the electrical rapidity and rush of his thoughts being such that only one out of fifty could he detain and write down, he was abstinent or almost abstinent.

It has been often remarked that the "Confessions" bear evidence of the exalted, idealised character due to opium; and that they are to be taken rather as the impressions of events seen through a vista of years, burdened with dream memories, than as a faithful record of facts and incidents. In one sense this is true; in another it is not. We believe that they are faithful to facts, so far as facts, in such a sensitively intellectual and imaginative nature, could be separated from the impressions produced by them. However much

matter-of-fact or scientific reader might desiderate clearer details on certain points, the ordinary common sense is satisfied by the recurrence of brief episodes, which are presented with a Defoe-like sincerity and circumstantiality, as Charles Knight says, which convey or restore the impression of psychological or ideal faithfulness; and in this lies the writer's art. To De Quincey himself, deducting what he felt was due to the necessity of disguise, even in the later forms of the work, it was all in the strictest sense true. There was no conscious "elevation" or departure from fact. But one element, already hinted at, must be distinctly emphasised and here exhibited in some of its specific bearings. It is essential to De Quincey's freedom that he should be lifted above certain lines of thought, or even of perception, which would necessitate a recognition of material or merely sensuous elements for their own sake. He will not consent to view the fact in itself, and honestly confesses that his relation to the fact is the one essential. And so far he is egotistic; but egotistic only because his nature was framed for an ideal life. In all relations it is true that, as Mr. Hill Burton has said, pressing and immediate needs alone could extort from him the acknowledgment of a material world, and that only while the needs lasted. We see this as clearly in the "Confessions" as anywhere. Observe how the details which he gathers and crystallises round a series of leading incidents are in his view wholly subordinated to the dreams. All is from the first viewed simply as leading up to them, and drawing such importance as they individually possess in his eyes from this fact. The only unity in his view is to be found in the dreams;

and hence the sympathetic demand made upon the reader at the very outset, if justice is to be done to them in the reading. "The final object of the whole record," he says, "lay in the dreams. For the sake of these the entire narrative arose." The phantasy not only works in alliance with the logical faculty, but commands it, like a pilot who for the nonce supersedes the captain. So, too, when he distinctly tells that, though his physical sufferings were sometimes "appalling," he holds that his "greatest misfortune" was his failing to recover any trace of Ann of Oxford Street, and that his disease is studiously spoken of in general only. His physical sufferings, his hunger, his gnawing pains, all in effect pass from his memory in view of the one leading impression of that loss, which is thus exalted, and artistically finds its justification in the place accorded to her in the dreams. For the same reason it is that, though his sufferings are spoken of as inexpressible, and figures derived from the convulsions of nature — earthquake, volcano, and tempest — used to illustrate them, there is no attempt to discriminate strictly between the sufferings of the body and the sufferings of the mind. Even the thoughtful reader is apt to lose sight of the collateral record of specific disease that clearly runs along with this record of mental impressions, and to become oblivious of the fact that any such ever existed. And this the more that, mainly to relieve what would otherwise have been a monotonous and painful recital, he allows himself to slip into the use of the word "enjoyment" in reference to his opium-eating in a special sense. The very popularity of the "Confessions" has in this way con-

to bear against his character, when only one side of them is followed and the other ignored. If, for the moment, he permits himself to acknowledge his communicativeness of personal details, it is at once justified by an ulterior reason bearing on possibilities the most remote; while his apology must be taken to bear rather on his analysis of moods and feelings than on his presentation of facts and outward details generally. He writes in one place:—

"You will think, perhaps, that I am too confidential and communicative of my own private history. It may be so. But my way of writing is rather to think aloud and follow my own humours, than much to inquire who is listening to me. . . . The fact is, I imagine myself writing at a distance of twenty—thirty—fifty years ahead of this present moment, either for the satisfaction of the few who may then retain any interest in myself, or of the many (a number that is sure to be continually growing) who will take an inextinguishable interest in the mysterious powers of opium."

The tendency, so marked and pervading, to ignore the outward and material in view of mental or ideal impressions, points to a possibility which, unless checked, as it was in his case, by nearly counterbalancing qualities, apt to pass into morbid melancholy, if not into insanity itself. This is the susceptibility to fall under one overruling impression or train of thought, without the power to find checks to it in outward occurrences. We see it early in many incidents in the autobiographic sketches in the trance by the side of his sister's corpse; in the confession that his brother's announcement that the inhabitants of his imaginary kingdom had tails like

monkeys affected him as keenly as if it had been a real circumstance; we see it also in that complete prostration under sorrow at the death of little Katherine Wordsworth, and the illusions of the eye thence resulting. These are but extreme phases of that excessive abstraction and high-strung idealism which manifested themselves so powerfully in his writings, and might even be said, paradoxical as the remark may be thought, to have determined his political position. He was a Liberal by his sympathies, though a Tory in name. What he revolted against in ultra-Liberalism was its early alliance with a utilitarian and purely material purpose. This is a point which has been so well put by a very able writer that we cannot do better than quote his words here:—

"He was, in fact, a Tory from the spiritual and ideal side of Toryism; and during the rude material struggle of those early years, this aspect of the creed was necessarily much out of sight. Latterly, however, and immediately after the Reform Bill, he became a Tory of the strictest sect. But this was rather because he revolted from the unimaginative and utilitarian character of Radicalism than because he approved the whole practical policy of the Tories. He was in many respects a Liberal in the truest sense of the word. He was ready to challenge all comers, to investigate all problems, to hold up every truth to the light."

And this in spite of his keen analytic intellect, which so to speak, only gave a more elevated platform from which to contemplate the larger questions of politics.

It is exceedingly characteristic of him that, in close-thoughted essay on the "Political Parties

Modern England," he should endeavour to establish a necessity for the existence of the two great parties as complemental rather than as opposing or harshly exclusive, which they must seem to be when looked at from the accidental point of view, where merely temporary and *personal* elements prevail. But he sees a "spiritual principle" behind all this; and expresses his surprise that "interpretations so idle of the refined differences between two parties, arising in the very bosom of civilisation, and at the most intellectual era of the most intellectual of nations,—*interpretations so gross of differences so spiritual,*—could ever have been entertained by reflective men." The two parties divide the functions of the Constitution; but, in dividing these, they *still distribute their care over the whole.* Parties as depositories of principle he regards rather than parties as seekers of power; and he holds, and shows by many instances, that in great crises their interests collide and harmonise to augment stability of institutions. The enormity of evil, he holds, has come by political depravity, when parties had become personal parties. They then need to be raised to the higher level of principle by national misfortune or crises.

Another striking point may be noted in connection with his idealising tendency. It is this, that although shy and sensitive in the extreme, shrinking from contact with artificial life in all its forms, he was remarkably fearless. His love of night-wandering might be taken to prove this, no less than his liking, that lay near to his innocently Bohemian propensity, for new surroundings. He was, in this sense, remarkably independent of circumstances: given quietude, he was almost

anywhere at home. Mr. Charles Knight speaks of his being haunted by fears and imaginations; but these almost invariably resulted from some contact with artificial life, from which his one healthful relief was escape to nature and solitude. On this point, Mrs. Baird Smith very well says:—

"There was one feature of my father's character which deserves to be pointed out,—this was the demand for the excitement of fear. This used to account to us for a great many of his curious habits, and his exaggerated difficulties about petty matters. He was quite incapable of fear in the real sense of the word, so much so that he could not understand it in us as children or young people; and when he was chilling our marrow with awesome stories of ghosts, murders, and mysteries, he only thought he was producing a luxurious excitement, though I can safely say I have never conquered the eerie terrors of those times. This enjoyment of the excitement of concealment and lurking enemies, &c., has always accounted to us in some measure for his positive dislike to having his affairs looked into and set straight, and it is borne out by his settling down much like other people when the excitement became burthensome to him through growing years."

These peculiar characteristics, we believe, may be taken, in conjunction with others, to account so far for his aversion to allow any business man to undertake the arrangement of his affairs, which would at any time, even when most disordered, have been comparatively easy. First, we can imagine that he shrank from the exposure of what would inevitably have borne, to such an one, the appearance of simplicity and folly in himself, and next,

he was haunted by fears that any one who had been in an intimate relation with him might suffer rudeness or loss at the hands of an agent.

Of the deep religious vein which had a subtle affinity with this high-strung idealism, and which penetrates his more serious writings, much might be said. For the purely sceptical attitude he has no favour: it is, in his view, highly irrational, as discrediting the most authoritative voices vested in man's higher nature. And his religious impulses, which were allied with so much that was dreamy and ideal, were amenable to the most logical constructions and justifications in his own hands. As exhibiting this very efficiently, we may be permitted to quote from a writer to whom we must acknowledge ourselves indebted:—

"Of the essays which we style religious, the general tone is that of a moderate High Churchman, but of one, nevertheless, who in any theological controversy would choose to take his own ground. With the Evangelical clergymen of the period it is not in his nature to sympathise. Both the doctrines and the manners of that school were repulsive to him. But he seems to have been perfectly indifferent to many points which in the Anglo-Catholic theory are essentials. Episcopacy he upheld because it was practically the best form of Church government for England. Of baptismal regeneration he thought so little, that he actually had a dispute with Wordsworth as to whether it was the doctrine of the English Church or not. Nor was he convinced until Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, the elder, whom they appointed arbiter, assured him there could be no doubt about the matter. Even then, how-

ever, he fidgeted under the burden of the discovery, and prophesied that before long that very question would agitate the Church of England to the centre—a prediction verified afterwards by the now half-forgotten Gorham case. On the question of inspiration his views were in accordance with the most advanced English Churchmen of the present day. He seems to have thought there was a good deal in Dr. Newman's theory of development, not as tending to favour Romanism, but as helping to harmonise Scripture with modern thought. He appears to mean that concurrently with the progress of mankind both in knowledge and civilisation will the matter of the Bible become clearer, and he instances the difference of our own interpretation of Scripture texts upon witchcraft and slavery from that of former generations. If we ever thought that Scripture enjoined us to burn or drown any poor old woman against whom her neighbours had a grudge, or that it sanctioned the sale and purchase of human beings and their consequent treatment like beasts, why may we not be under equal delusion upon certain other points now? But the successive disappearance of errors before the gradual advance of truth was development; and De Quincey accordingly believed that much of it was probably in store for us.

"In all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, De Quincey was a steadfast believer. His reply to Hume upon miracles, though very short, and perhaps little known, well deserves the attention of students of divinity. His vindication of Christianity as a peculiar religion, such that it cannot be regarded either simply as one of a series, or co-ordinate with other equally widespread

religions, is a masterly performance. He calls attention to the fact that in no other religion but Christianity and those which are connected with it is morality recognised as religious. The national worship or *cultus* has been in all other religions wholly separated from questions of virtue and vice. In Christianity alone is our duty to our neighbour made *part* of our duty to God. In Judaism this is partially the case; in Mohammedanism less so; but still the influence of a true revelation is to be detected in the one as well as in the other. The originality and subtlety of De Quincey's mind are nowhere more conspicuous than in this essay; and it is worthy of observation that an intellect at once so powerful and so keen as his, and a boldness of inquiry which shrank from no length of investigation, should never have carried its possessor beyond the confines of revelation."—*Quarterly Review*, 1861.

The fable of the chameleon does not lack application in the reading of character. It results from the singular complexity of elements in the man we are studying—a plexity which we have honestly endeavoured to re- nise and to understand—that, as there were two Rich- onds in the field, so there are already various De Quinceys in biographical literature. How reconcile, for instance, the De Quincey of Wilson, of Charles Knight, of Miss Mitford, of Mr. Hill Burton, of Mr. J. T. Fields, of Hawthorne, and others, with the De Quincey of Miss ——, and those who have followed her? They cannot all be true and exhaustive. Taken as complete portraits, they simply exclude each other. We cannot be far wrong, in such a case, to prefer what is sympathetic and genial to what is hard, unresponsive, and dogmatic, knowing as

we do that in all such cases it is the heart that sees; or, in other words, that the eye sees what it brings with it the power of seeing, and however quick *by itself*, sees but the outside, the coat, the clothes, the colour of the paper in which the real coin is wrapped up.

+ Thus in De Quincey we see emerge out of a combination of faculties usually regarded as alien to it, a warm interest in life in its varied aspects, vicarious sympathies, not to any degree artificialised, as in Rousseau and men of his type, by perverted sensibilities that have been fed by analysis of prurient experiences. Nor in De Quincey's case do we see any trace of his submerging the individual in a general haze of pseudo-humanitarianism, as is inevitably the tendency of sentimentalism, pure and proper. His peculiar interest in humanity does not lessen his keenness of sympathy with individual cases. He has all an Englishman's love for getting at the fact, at the individual. It is his keen individual interest that makes his dreams so touching, notwithstanding the exceptional atmosphere in which his great narrative for the most part moves, and also—though it may surprise some to read it—imparts to much of his writing an evident love for innocent gossip. How much, for example, do his writings owe to such personal touches as this:—+

"How feelingly I learned in London, as heretofore I had learned on the wild hillsides in Wales, what an unspeakable blessing is that of warmth! A more killing curse there does not exist, for man or woman, than that bitter combat between the weariness that prompts sleep and the keen searching cold that forces you from the first access of sleep to start

up horror-stricken, and to seek warmth vainly in renewed exercise, though long since fainting under fatigue. . . . O ancient women, daughters of toil and suffering, amongst all the hardships and bitter inheritances of flesh that ye are called upon to face, not one—not even hunger—seems in my eyes comparable to that of nightly cold. To seek a refuge from cold in bed, and then, from the thin, gauzy texture of the miserable, worn-out blankets, 'not to sleep a wink,' as Wordsworth records of poor old women in Dorsetshire, where coals, from local causes, were at the very dearest,—what a terrific enemy was *that* for poor old grandmothers to face in fight! . . . About this time (1802) a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me at different periods of my life,—viz., a sort of twitching (I knew not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach), which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the effort to relieve it constantly awaking me, at length I slept only from exhaustion, and through increasing weakness (as I said before), I was constantly falling asleep and constantly awaking. Too generally the very attainment of any deep repose seemed as if mechanically linked to some fatal necessity of self-interruption. It was as though a cup were gradually filled by the sleepy overflow of some natural fountain, the fulness of the cup expressing symbolically the completeness of the rest; but then, in the next stage of the process, it seemed as though the rush and torrent-like babbling of the redundant waters, when

running over from every part of the cup, interrupted the slumber which, in their earlier stage of silent gathering, they had so naturally produced. Such and so regular in its swell and its collapse—in its tardy growth and its violent dispersion—did this endless alternation of stealthy sleep and stormy awaking, travel through stages as natural as the increments of twilight, or the kindlings of the dawn: no rest that was not a prologue to terror; no sweet tremulous pulses of restoration that did not suddenly explode through rolling clamours of fiery disruption."

And this leads us to a point where we must use and attempt to justify a certain phrase which, as we have hinted, will no doubt be felt at first to be somewhat startling in reference to De Quincey. This is the John Bull element which we referred to in our introductory chapter, and which, incredible as it may appear, lay deep in De Quincey's nature, in association with all a dreamer's love of solitude, an erratic if still inoffensive vein of Bohemianism, and a speculative subtlety more like that of a German than of an Englishman. This John Bull element to a great extent sprang out of, and depended upon, his love of human nature in its uncorrupted simplicity. The poetic vein of sentiment, conjoined with deep reverence for ancient forms with which this most readily allies itself, tends inevitably to a certain conservatism of nature. De Quincey was thus far a conservative. And we must needs confess, that he did not escape *some* of the prejudices which are common to all such dispositions. Taken on the side of sympathy, they are necessarily patriotic rather than

cosmopolitan; and wide as may be their eclecticism and openness to new thought, as such, and eager as they may be for originality in any form, they are apt to have implicit confidence in the customs among which they have been reared. His devotion to the Church of England is to be accounted for rather on this ground, than on that of a full acceptance of her formulas, or sympathy with any system that could give colour to the least claim of sacerdotalism. And the same reason may be given for some of his social preferences. One of his critics, indeed, makes good cause against him on this ground. After having condemned some of his views of French and German manners, the critic winds up—"One cannot but regret that the vulgar prejudice of the old-fashioned John Bull should have been embodied in the pages of a master of our language." But it is quite possible to put too rigid a construction on an isolated passage; and certainly De Quincey, in spite of his John Bullism, was sometimes inclined to deal as severely by certain elements in English life and manners as he could have done by anything French or German. In one place, for example, we meet with this incisive analysis of a weak point:—

"Nobody can more readily acknowledge than myself the integrity which lies at the bottom of our insular reserve and moroseness. Two sound qualities are at the root of these unpleasant phenomena—modesty or unpresumingness in the first place, and sincerity in the second. To be impudent was so much of the essence of profligacy in the ideas of the ancients, that the one became the most ordinary

expression * for the other; and sincerity again, or directness of purpose, is so much of the essence of conscientiousness, that we take *obliquity* or *crookedness* for one way of expounding dishonesty, or depravity of the moral sense—and, according to their natural tendencies, no doubt this is true. But such things admit of many modifications. Without absolute dissimulation, it is allowable and even laudable to reject, by a second or amended impulse, what the first involuntary impulse would have prompted; and to practise so much disguise as may withdraw from too open notice the natural play of the human feelings. By what right does a man display to another, in his very look of alienation and repulsion at his first introduction, that he dislikes him, or that he is doubtful whether he shall like him? Yet this is the too general movement of British sincerity. The play of the feelings, the very flux and reflux of con-

* Viz., in the word *improbus*. But so defective are dictionaries, that there is some difficulty in convincing scholars that the leading idea of *improbus*, its sole original idea is—impudence, boldness, or audacity. Great is the incoherency and absurdity of learned men in questions of philology. Thus, Heyne, in a vain attempt to make out (*consistently* to make out) the well-known words, "labor improbus omnia vincet," says that *improbus* means *pertinax*. How so? *Improbus* always originally has the meaning of *audacious*. Thus Pliny, speaking of the first catalogue of stars made by Hipparchus, calls it, "labor etiam Deo improbus," an enterprise audacious even for a superhuman being. Here is the very same word *labor* again qualified by the same epithet. And five hundred other cases might be adduced in which the sense of audacity, and that only, will unlock all, as by a master key. Salmasius fancied (see his *De Pallio* of Tertullian) that the true idea was the *excessive* or *enormous*, whatever violated the common standards in any mode of disproportion.

tending emotions, passes too nakedly, in the very act and process of introduction, under the eyes of the party interested. Frankness is good; honesty is good; but not a frankness and an honesty which counteracts the very purposes of social meetings—for, unless he comes with the purpose of being pleased, why does a man come at all into meetings, not of business or necessity, but of relaxation and social pleasure?

"I am not apt to praise the Continent at the expense of my own country; but here is an instance in which, generally speaking, the Continental taste is better than ours. No great meeting is complete in Germany, in France, or in Italy, unless the intellect of the land—its scholarship, its philosophy, its literature—be there by deputation; 'the table is not full' unless these great leading interests are there represented.* We inaugurate our wine-cups by remembering the king's health; we inaugurate (let it not be thought profane to make such an allusion) our great civil transactions by prayer, and remembrance of our highest relations: in reason, then, and by all analogy, we should inaugurate and legitimate, as it were, our meetings of festal pleasure by the presence of intellectual power and intellectual grace as the ultimate sources upon which we should all be glad to have it thought that our pleasures depend. Aristocracy of Britain! be not careless of the philosophy and intellect of the age, lest it be thought that your pursuits and taste exist in alienation from both. Dr. Johnson had talked himself into being so much talked of, that he—had he lived for another generation—would have become indispensable to

fashionable parties. Coleridge, who was, most assuredly, far superior in creative power and fertility of new intuitions to Dr. Johnson, and immeasurably superior in the philosophic understanding (for in direct philosophic speculation Dr. Johnson never even attempted anything, except in one little pamphlet against Soame Jenyns), was scarcely beginning to be heard of amongst the higher circles of England when he died. The reason for comparing him with Dr. Johnson is on account of their common gifts of colloquial power. And it may be mentioned that three persons in all, from the ranks of intellectual people, have had a footing in privileged society—I mean not merely an admission there, but a known and extensive acceptation. These three were—Lord Byron, Dr. Johnson, and Sir Walter Scott. Now, it is observable that the first was, in some sense, a denizen of such society in right of birth and rank; and of both the others it is remarkable that their passes were first countersigned by kings—Dr. Johnson's by George III., Sir Walter's by George IV."

There was, however, one point on which he did not represent the John Bullism of his day; and therein he showed, as we think, a distinct forecast and anticipation of later social ameliorations. He did not believe in flogging in any form. He held to the principle that "all corporal punishments whatsoever, and upon whomsoever inflicted, are hateful, and an indignity to our common nature—enshrined in the person of the sufferer. . . . As man grows more intellectual, the power of managing him by his intellect and his moral nature, in utter contempt of all

appeals to his mere animal instincts of pain, must go on *pari passu.*" This is but one of the convictions in which he was confirmed, if indeed it was not created in him, by his contact with classes of people from whom men, bred in the classes he had been bred in, generally hold affectedly aloof.

His peculiar delight in crowds and demonstrations —a characteristic utterly unexpected, looking at him from the common point of view—might be cited not inaptly as another expression of this John Bullism, more especially as the intensity of the delight was invariably determined by some patriotic or other idea lying outside the mere concourse in itself. Many instances of this are to be met with in his various writings, and in letters. Particularly do we recall a most vigorous, and at the same time delicate and suggestive description of the arrival of *Blucher* in London—a sight to which Lamb accompanied him. De Quincey's words, which show how, if cultured, he had nothing of the *nil admirari* order, transport us back to an old era:

"Marshal Blucher, who still more powerfully [than the Czar] converged upon himself the interest of the public, was lodged in a little quadrangle of St. James's Palace (that to the right of the clock-tower entrance.) So imperious and exacting was the general curiosity to see the features of the old soldier —this Marshal '*Forwards*,' as he was always called in Germany, who had exhibited the greatest merit of an Abdiel fidelity on occasion of the mighty day of Jena—that the court was filled from an early hour of every morning, until a late dinner-hour, with a mob of all ranks, calling him by his

name, *tout court*, 'Blucher! Blucher!' At short intervals, not longer in general than five minutes, the old warrior obeyed the summons throughout the day, unless he was known to be absent on some public occasion. This slavery must have been most wearisome to his feelings. But he submitted with the utmost good-nature, and allowed cheerfully for the enthusiasm which did so much honour to himself and to his country. In fact, this enthusiasm on his first arrival in London, showed itself in a way that astonished everybody, and was half calculated to alarm a stranger. He had directed the postilion to proceed straightway to Carlton House—his purpose being to present his duty in person to the Regent, before he rested upon English ground.

"This was his way of expressing his homage to the British Nation, for upholding, through all fortunes, that sacred cause of which he also never had despaired. Moreover, his hatred of France and the very name French was so intense, that upon that title also he cherished an ancient love towards England. As the carriage passed through the gateway of the Horse Guards, the crowd which had discovered him, became numerous. When the garden or park entrance to the palace was thrown open to admit Blucher, the vast mob, for the first and the last time, carried the entrance as if by storm. All opposition from the porters, the police, the soldiers on duty, was in vain; and many thousands of people accompanied the veteran, literally hustling his carriage, and, in a manner, carrying him in their arms to the steps of the palace door—on the top of which, waiting to receive him, stood the English

Regent. The Regent himself smiled graciously and approvingly upon this outrage which, on any minor occasion, would have struck him with consternation, perhaps, as well as disgust. Lamb, as well as myself, witnessed part of the scene; which was the most emphatic exhibition of an uncontrolled impulse —a perfect rapture of joy and exultation, possessing a vast multitude with entire unity of feeling, that I have ever witnessed. . . . Marshal Blucher, at least, could have no reason to think us an arrogant people, or narrow in our national sensibilities to merit, wherever found. He could not but know that we had also great military names to show—one or two greater than his own; for in reality, his qualities were those of a mere fighting captain, with no great reach of capacity, and of slender accomplishments. Yet *we*—that is to say, even *the street mob* of London —glorified him as Lord Nelson was never glorified, certainly more than they ever did the Duke of Wellington." *

And if he was faithful to a healthy John Bullism in this enthusiasm for patriotic crowds, he as certainly reflected it in his way of disposing, as if by

* One of the few persons still living, who, like De Quincey, witnessed this spectacle, viz., Lord Albemarle, thus writes of it in his "Recollections of Fifty Years:"—"In the month of June 1814, there was a whole menagerie of 'lions' in the persons of the allied sovereigns and their most distinguished generals. They had come over to pay a visit to that ally whose powerful co-operation had enabled them to hurl from the throne the mightiest tyrant with which the world had been afflicted in modern times. I formed one of the crowd that assembled on Westminster Bridge to witness the arrival of Field-Marshal Von Blucher, or 'Blucher,' as the Londoners used to call him. We

anticipation, of the rights-of-woman theory. This passage occurs in the eloquent essay on "Joan of Arc!"

"Woman, sister,—there are some things which you do not execute as well as your brother, man; no, nor never will. Pardon me if I doubt whether you will ever produce a great poet from your choirs, or a Mozart, or a Phidias, or a Michael Angelo, or a great philosopher, or a great scholar. By which last is meant—not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electional power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the angel of the resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life. If you *can* create yourselves into any of these great creators, why have you not?

"Yet, sister woman, though I cannot consent to find a Mozart or a Michael Angelo in your sex, cheerfully, and with the love that burns in depths of admiration, I acknowledge that you can do one thing as well as the best of us men—a greater thing than ever Milton is known to have done, or Michael Angelo, — you can die grandly, and as goddesses

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had been waiting a good hour and a half, when we heard loud cheering from the Surrey side, intermingled with cries of 'Bluoher for ever.' The object of this ovation turned out to be a fat, greasy butcher, mounted on a sorry nag, and carrying a meat-tray on his shoulder. Shortly afterwards Marshal 'Forwards' appeared in a barouche drawn by four horses, which, from the density of the crowd, were obliged to go at a foot's pace. We gave him a most enthusiastic reception, and he returned our greetings by holding out his hand to be shaken by the men and kissed by the women."

would die, were goddesses mortal. If any distant worlds (which *may* be the case) are so far ahead of us Tellurians in optical resources, as to see distinctly through their telescopes all that we do on earth, what is the grandest sight to which we ever treat them? St. Peter's at Rome, do you fancy, on Easter Sunday, or Luxor, or perhaps the Himalayas? Oh no! my friend: suggest something better; these are baubles to *them;* they see in other worlds, in their own, far better toys of the same kind. These, take my word for it, are nothing. Do you give it up? The finest thing, then, we have to show them, is a scaffold on the morning of execution. I assure you there is a strong muster in those far telescopic worlds on any such morning, of those who happen to find themselves occupying the right hemisphere to peep at *us.* How, then, if it be announced in some such telescopic world by those who make a livelihood of catching glimpses at our newspapers, whose language they have long since deciphered, that the poor victim in the morning's sacrifice is a woman? How, if it be published in that distant world that the sufferer wears upon her head, in the eyes of many, the garlands of martyrdom? How, if it should be some Marie Antoinette, the widowed queen, coming forward on the scaffold, and presenting to the morning air her head, turned grey by sorrow, daughter of Cæsars kneeling down humbly to kiss the guillotine, as one that worships death? How, if it were the noble Charlotte Corday, that in the bloom of youth, that with the loveliest of persons, that with homage waiting upon her smiles wherever she turned her face to scatter them—homage that

followed these smiles as surely as the carols of birds, after showers in spring, follow the reappearing sun and the racing of sunbeams over the hills—yet thought all these things cheaper than the dust upon her sandals, in comparison of deliverance from hell for her dear, suffering France! Ah! these were spectacles indeed for these sympathising people in distant worlds; and some, perhaps, would suffer a sort of martyrdom themselves, because they could not testify their wrath, could not bear witness to the strength of love and to the fury of hatred that burned within them at such scenes; could not gather into golden urns some of that glorious dust which rested in the catacombs of earth."

And with respect to the weakness of men in the regard they pay to the personal appearance of each other, he has a confession to make, which certainly also breathes somewhat of the air of John Bullism, though we *might* regard it as having been in a measure fortified by purely personal considerations.

"From my very earliest years—that is, the earliest years in which I had any sense of what belongs to true dignity of mind—I declare to you that I have considered the interest which men, grown men, take in the personal appearance of each other as one of the meanest aspects under which human curiosity presents itself. Certainly, I have the same intellectual perceptions of differences in such things as other men have; but I connect none of the feelings, whether of admiration or contempt, liking or disliking, which are obviously connected with these perceptions by human beings generally. Such words as 'commanding appearance,' 'pre-

possessing appearance,' 'prepossessing countenance,' applied to the figures or faces of the males of the human species, have no meanings in my ears: no man commands me, no man prepossesses me, by anything in, on, or about his carcass. What care I for any man's legs? I laugh at his ridiculous presumption in conceiting that I shall trouble myself to admire or to respect anything that he can produce in his *physics*. What! shall I honour Milo for the very qualities which he has in common with the beastly ox he carries—his thews and sinews, his ponderous strength and weight, and the quantity of thumping that his hide will carry? I disclaim and disdain any participation in such green-girl feelings. I admit that the feelings I am here condemning are found in connection with the highest intellects; in particular, Mr. Coleridge, for instance, once said to me, as a justifying reason for his dislike of a certain celebrated Scotsman, with an air of infinite disgust —'that ugh!' (making a guttural sound as if of execration) 'he' (viz., the said Scotsman) 'was so chicken-hearted.' I have been assured, by the way, that Mr. Coleridge was mistaken in the mere matter of fact; but supposing that he were not, what a reason for a philosopher to build a disgust upon! And Mr. Wordsworth, in or about the year 1820, in expressing the extremity of his *nil admirari* spirit, declared that he would not go ten yards out of his road to see the finest specimen of man (intellectually speaking) that Europe had to show; and so far, indeed, I do not quarrel with his opinion, but Mr. Wordsworth went on to say that this indifference did not extend itself to man considered physically; and

that he would still exert himself to a small extent (suppose a mite or so), for the sake of seeing Belzoni. *That* was the case he instanced, and, as I understood him, not by way of general illustration of his meaning, but that he really felt an exclusive interest in this particular man's *physics*. Now, Belzoni was certainly a good tumbler, as I have heard; and hopped well on one leg, when surmounted and erected by a pyramid of men and boys; and jumped capitally through a hoop; and did all sorts of tricks in all sorts of styles, not at all worse than any monkey, bear, or learned pig, that ever exhibited in Great Britain. And I would myself have given a shilling to have seen him fight that cursed Turk that assaulted him in the streets of Cairo; and would have given him a crown for catching the circumcised dog by the throat and effectually taking the conceit out of his Mohammedan carcass; but then *that* would have been for the spectacle of the passions, which, in such a case, would have been let loose: as to the mere animal Belzoni—(who after all was not to be compared to Topham, the Warwickshire man, that drew back by main force a cart, and its driver, and a strong horse)—as to the mere animal Belzoni, I say, and his bull neck, I would have much preferred to see a real bull or the Darlington ox. The sum of the matter is this: all men, even those who are most manly in their style of thinking and feeling, in many things retain the childishness of their childish years: no man thoroughly weeds himself of all. And this particular mode of childishness is one of the commonest into which they fall the more readily from the force

of sympathy, and because they apprehend no reason for directing any vigilance against it. But I contend that reasonably no feelings of deep interest are justifiable as applied to any point of external form or feature in human beings, unless under certain reservations: one of which is, that they shall have reference to women; because women, being lawfully the objects of passions and tender affections, which can have no existence as applied to men, are objects also, rationally and consistently, of all other secondary feelings (such as those derived from their personal appearance) which have any tendency to promote and support the first. Whereas between men the highest mode of intercourse is merely intellectual, which is not of a nature to receive support or strength from any feelings of pleasure or disgust connected with the accidents of external appearance: but exactly in the degree in which these have any influence at all they must warp and disturb by improper biasses; and the single case of exception, where such feelings can be honourable and laudable amongst the males of the human species, is when they regard such deformities as are the known products and expressions of criminal or degrading propensities. All beyond this, I care not by whom countenanced, is infirmity of mind, and would be baseness if it were not excused by imbecility."

The personal point obtrudes itself on one or two occasions in the course of his multifarious writings. For example, in defending himself from the possible charge that he had been tempted to slip into the recital of certain circumstances in relation to Dr.

Parr in order to a disparagement of his personal appearance, he writes:—

"I, that write this paper, have myself a mean, personal appearance; and I love men of mean appearance. Having one spur more than other men to seek distinction in those paths where nature has not obstructed them, they have one additional chance (and a great one) for giving an extended development to their intellectual powers. Many a man has risen to eminence under the powerful reaction of his mind, in fierce counter-agency (sometimes even more nobly, in grand benignant indifference), to the scorn of the unworthy, daily evoked by his personal defects, who with a handsome person would have sank into the luxury of a careless life under the tranquillising smiles of continual admiration."

But, though a conservative by instinct, and a severe critic of manners, how easily, how gracefully, he can yield himself to the sentiment, from which at first manners derive their significance and value, but which by lapse of time too often dies out of them, to embody and justify itself in exceptional actions. We have a striking instance of this in the dying words of Kant, when he called for his friend, with the wish, "that I should kiss him."

"The pathos which belongs to such a mode of final valediction is dependent altogether for its effect upon the contrast between itself and the prevailing tone of manners amongst the society where such an incident occurs. In some parts of the Continent, there prevailed during the last century a most effeminate practice amongst *men* of exchanging kisses as a regular mode of salutation on meeting

after any considerable period of separation. Under such a standard of manners, the farewell kiss of the dying could have no special effect of pathos. But in nations so inexorably manly as the English, any act, which for the moment seems to depart from the usual standard of manliness, becomes exceedingly impressive when it recalls the spectators' thoughts to the mighty power which has been able to work such a revolution—the power of death in its final agencies. The brave man has ceased to be in any exclusive sense a man: he has become an infant in his weakness—he has become a woman in his craving for tenderness and pity. Forced by agony, he has laid down his sexual character, and retains only his generic character of a human creature. And he that is manliest amongst the bystanders, is also the readiest to sympathise with this affecting change. Ludlow, the Parliamentary general of horse, a man of iron nerves, and peculiarly hostile to all scenical displays of sentiment, mentions, nevertheless, in his Memoirs, with sympathetic tenderness, the case of a cousin,—that, when lying mortally wounded on the ground, and feeling his life to be rapidly welling, entreated his relative to dismount 'and kiss him.' Everybody must remember the immortal scene on board the 'Victory,' at 4 P.M., on October 21, 1805, and the farewell, '*Kiss me, Hardy*,' of the mighty admiral. And here, again, in the final valediction of the stoical Kant, we read another indication, speaking oracularly from dying lips of natures the sternest, that the last necessity—that call which survives all others in men of noble and impassioned hearts—is the necessity of love, is the call for some relenting

caress, such as may simulate for a moment some phantom image of female tenderness in an hour when the actual presence of females is impossible."

Springing out of this John Bullism, too, we note a very active interest in the leading public movements of his day. He read the newspapers as regularly as any county member of Parliament, not resting content with political news merely, but passing down with most curious interest upon details, such as police-court reports, criminal trials, and so forth; and he was wont to exercise his ingenuity in trying to guess at the circumstances that had precipitated the offence, or in following up the divergent lines of evidence and bringing them all to one point, to trace and identify the criminal. That his knowledge of human affairs was very keen, and had been sharpened by dwelling much and often on the principle that lies behind the alternate courses of conduct possible in some of the more difficult affairs of daily life, is proved by his essay on "Casuistry," which, in its latter part, comes as near to laying down the true principle in certain very frequent domestic entanglements as any such writing could possibly do,—showing how very far indeed he was from living apart from any phase of human life; and how as his experience grew more mature, the habit of never letting go a detail till he had ranged it under a principle was trained and strengthened. Had this not been so, he certainly could not have written that article on "Casuistry."

But if any further proof were needed of the justness of his claim to be a philosopher—one to whom nothing that concerned human nature was without

interest—we might make extract of this most sagacious passage, showing the bearing that the temperance movement has upon good cookery—a point that deserves, even at this day, all the emphasis such an authority can give it. Bad cookery and neglect of exercise, he holds, are the two chief inducing reasons for the increasing love of alcohol. He is grave enough in his view of the evil, but his ready sympathy with acute and morbid forms of suffering from appetite is enough to enable him to relieve the treatment by airy gleams of humour, and indeed to poetise it, as we scarcely thought such a subject could be poetised. He writes:—

"One object, to which the gladiator matched in single duel with intemperance must direct a religious vigilance, is the *digestibility* of the food: it must be digestible, not only by its original qualities, but also by its culinary preparation. In this last point we are all of us Manicheans: all of us yield a cordial assent to that Manichean proverb which refers the meats and the cooks of this world to two opposite fountains of light and of darkness. Oromasdes it is, or the good principle, that sends the food; Ahrimanes, or the evil principle, that everywhere sends the cooks. Man has been repeatedly described, or even defined, as by differential privilege of his nature, as 'a cooking animal.' Brutes, it is said, have faces,—man only has a countenance; brutes are as well able to eat as man,—man only is able to cook what he eats. Such are the romances of self-flattery. I, on the contrary, maintain that many thousands of years have not availed, in this point, to raise our race generally to the level of ingenious savages. The natives of the

Society and the Friendly Isles, or of New Zealand, and other favoured spots, had, and still have, an *art* of cookery, though very limited in its range; the French have an art, and a real art, and very much more extensive; but we English are about upon a level (as regards this science) with the ape, to whom an instinct whispers that chestnuts may be roasted; or with the aboriginal Chinese of Charles Lamb's story, to whom the experience of many centuries had revealed thus much, viz., that a dish very much beyond the raw flesh of their ancestors might be had by burning down the family mansion, and thus roasting the pig-stye. Rudest of barbarian devices is English cookery, not much in advance of this primitive Chinese step,—a fact which it would not be worth while to lament, were it not for the sake of the poor trembling deserter from the banners of intoxication, who is thus,* and by no other cause, so often thrown back beneath the yoke which he had abjured. Past counting are the victims of alcohol, that, having by vast efforts emancipated themselves for a season, are violently forced into relapsing by the nervous irritations of demoniac cookery. Unhappily for *them*, the horrors of indigestion are relieved for the moment, however ultimately strengthened by strong liquors; the relief is immediate, and cannot fail to be perceived; but the aggravation, being removed to a distance, is not always referred to its proper cause. This is the capital rock and stumbling-block in the path of him who is hurrying back to the camps of temperance; and many a reader is likely to misapprehend the case through the habit he has acquired of supposing

indigestion to lurk chiefly amongst *luxurious* dishes. But, on the contrary, it is amongst the plainest, simplest, and commonest dishes that such misery lurks in England. Let us glance at these articles of diet, beyond all comparison of most ordinary occurrence—potatoes, bread, and butcher meat. The art of preparing potatoes for *human* use is utterly unknown, except in certain provinces of our empire, and amongst certain sections of the labouring class. In our great cities—London, Edinburgh, &c.—the sort of things which you see offered at table under the name and reputation of potatoes are such that, if you could suppose the company to be composed of Centaurs and Lapithæ, or any other quarrelsome people, it would become necessary for the police to interfere. The potato of cities is a very dangerous missile; and, if thrown with an accurate aim by an angry hand, will fracture any known skull. In volume and consistency it is very like a paving stone; only that, I should say, the paving stone had the advantage of it in tenderness. And upon this horrid basis, which youthful ostriches would repent of swallowing, the trembling, palpitating invalid, fresh from the scourging of alcohol, is requested to build the superstructure of his dinner. The proverb says, that three flittings are as bad as a fire; and in that model I conceive that three potatoes, as they are found at many British dinner-tables, would be equal, in principle of ruin, to two glasses of vitriol. The same savage ignorance appears, and not so often, in the bread of this island. Myriads of families eat it in that early state of sponge which bread assumes during the process of baking; but less than sixty hours will not

fit this dangerous article of human diet to be eaten. And those who are acquainted with the works of Parmentier, or other learned investigators of bread and the baker's art, must be aware that this quality of sponginess (though quite equal to the ruin of the digestive organs) is but one in a legion of vices to which the article is liable. A German of much research wrote a book on the conceivable faults in a pair of shoes, which he found to be about six hundred and sixty-six; many of them, as he observed, requiring a very delicate process of study to find out; whereas the possible faults in bread, which are not less in number, being also, I conceive, about equal to the number of the Beast, require no study at all for the detection—they publish themselves through all varieties of misery. But the perfection of barbarism, as regards our island cookery, is reserved for animal food; and the two poles of Oromasdes and Ahrimanes are nowhere so conspicuously exhibited. Our insular sheep, for instance, are so far superior to any which the continent produces, that the present Prussian minister at our court is in the habit of questioning a man's right to talk of mutton, as anything beyond a great idea, unless he can prove a residence in Great Britain. One other case he cites of a dinner on the Elbe, when a particular leg of mutton really struck him as rivalling any which he had known in England. The mystery seemed inexplicable; but, upon inquiry, it turned out to be an importation from Leith. Yet this incomparable article, to produce which the skill of the feeder must cooperate with the peculiar bounty of nature, calls forth the most dangerous refinements of barbarism

in its cookery. A Frenchman requires, as the primary qualification of flesh-meat, that it should be tender. The English universally, but especially the Scots, treat that quality with indifference, or with bare toleration. What we require is that it should be fresh, that is, recently killed (in which state it cannot be digested except by a crocodile, or perhaps here and there a leopard); and we present it at table in a transition state of leather, demanding the teeth of a tiger to rend it in pieces, and the stomach of a tiger to digest it.

. . . . . .

The whole process and elaborate machinery of digestion are felt to be mean and humiliating, when viewed in relation to our mere animal economy. But they rise into dignity, and assert their own supreme importance, when they are studied from another station, viz., in relation to the intellect and temper: no man dares then to despise them. It is then seen that these functions of the human system form the essential basis upon which the strength and health of our higher nature repose; and that upon these functions, chiefly, the genial happiness of life is dependent. All the rules of prudence, or gifts of experience that life can accumulate, will never do as much for human comfort and welfare as would be done by a stricter attention, and a wiser science, directed to the digestive system. In this attention lies the key to any perfect restoration for the victims of intemperance: and, considering the peculiar hostility to the digestive health which exists in the dietetic habits of our own country, it may be feared that nowhere upon earth has the reclaimed martyr to intemperance so difficult

a combat to sustain; nowhere, therefore, is it so important to direct the attention upon an *artificial* culture of those resources which naturally, and by the established habits of the land, are surest to be neglected. The sheet-anchor for the storm-beaten sufferer, who is labouring to recover a haven of rest from the agonies of intemperance, and who has had the fortitude to abjure the poison which ruined, and which also for brief intervals offered him his only consolation, lies beyond all doubt, in a most anxious regard to everything connected with this supreme function of our animal economy. And, as few men that are not regularly trained to medical studies can have the complex knowledge requisite for such a duty, some printed guide should be sought of a regular professional order. Twenty years ago, Dr. Wilson Philip published a valuable book of this class, which united a wide range of practical directions as to the choice of diet, and as to the qualities and tendencies of all esculent articles likely to be found at British tables, with some ingenious speculations upon the still mysterious theory of digestion. These were derived from experiments made upon rabbits; and I notice them chiefly for the sake of remarking, that the rationale of digestion as suggested there, explains the reason of a fact, which merely *as* a fact had not been known until modern times, viz., the injuriousness to enfeebled stomachs of all fluid. . . . A robust stomach may be equal to the trying task of supporting a fluid such as tea for breakfast; but for a feeble stomach, and still more for a stomach artificially *enfeebled* by bad habits, broiled beef, or something equally solid and animal, but not too much subject

to the action of fire, is the only tolerable diet. This, indeed, is the one capital rule for a sufferer from habitual intoxication, who must inevitably labour under an impaired digestion: that as little as possible he should use of any liquid diet, and as little as possible of vegetable diet."

So much for his interests in the difficulties of domestic and social life: not less keen was his concern for those great national developments, on which individual well-being and freedom so much depend; for, as we have said already, whilst he was a conservative by name and attachment, he was by sentiment and sympathy a liberal, owing chiefly to his excessive respect for the individual will which, as we have seen, led him, unlike the genuine conservative of his day, to oppose on principle any and every form of corporal punishment. His proneness to see a common nature underlying every possible abnormal manifestation precluded him from being in the specific sense a Tory, or, indeed, a party man. It was characteristic of him to note as a defect in Charles Lamb's character (with which he otherwise was so fully in sympathy), that "he had no ears for the cannon of Waterloo." De Quincey himself was, to use two words from Milton's "Comus," "all ear" for these voices in the interludes of his rapt self-communings, which seemed only to give them the deeper effect when they were heard. And not only so. Few men have been able to combine with dreamy meditativeness and speculative power an interest in contemporary affairs so eager, and so exact and detailed a knowledge of the various influences and counter-influences, out of which our present constitution and

our political life have grown. To read some articles on De Quincey, one would gather that, if he was anything but a dreamer, he was a mere bookworm, deeply devoted to Greek; and more inclined to squabble over an accent or a favourite reading than to possess himself of the spirit of the author. Whereas in political and social matters, precisely as in literature, he had no regard for the past as the past, save as it aided to enlighten the present. Who would have expected De Quincey to have gathered up, on the spur of the moment, the whole development of political eloquence in a single paragraph as in this passage:—

"Up to the era of James I., the eloquence of either House of Parliament could not be very striking. Parliament met only for the despatch of business; and that business was purely fiscal, or (as at times happened) judicial. The constitutional functions of Parliament were narrow; and they were narrowed still more severely by the jealousy of the executive Government. With the expansion, or rather first growth and development of a gentry, or third estate, expanded, *pari passu*, the political field of their jurisdiction and their deliberative functions. This widening field, as a birth out of new existences, unknown to former laws or usages, was, of course, not contemplated by those laws or usages. Constitutional law could not provide for the exercise of rights by a body of citizens, when, as yet, that body had itself no existence. A gentry, as the depository of a vast overbalance of property, real as well as personal, had not matured itself till the latter years of James I. Consequently the new functions, which the instinct of their new situation prompted them

to assume, were looked upon by the Crown, most sincerely, as unlawful usurpations. This led, as we know, to a most fervent and impassioned struggle, the most so of any struggle which has ever armed the hands of men with the sword. For the passions take a far profounder sweep when they are supported by deep thought and high principles.

"This element of fervid strife was already, for itself, an atmosphere most favourable to political eloquence. Accordingly, the speeches of that day, though generally too short to attain that large compass and sweep of movement, without which it is difficult to kindle or to sustain any conscious enthusiasm in an audience, were of a high quality as to thought and energy of expression, as high as their circumstantial disadvantages allowed. Lord Strafford's great effort is deservedly admired to this day, and the latter part of it has been pronounced a *chef d'œuvre*. A few years before that era all the orators of note were, and must have been, judicial orators; and amongst them Lord Bacon, to whom every reader's thoughts will point as the most memorable, attained the chief object of all oratory, if what Ben Jonson reports of him be true, that he had his audience passive to the motions of his will. But Jonson was, perhaps, too scholastic a judge to be a fair representative judge; and, whatever he may choose to say or think, Lord Bacon was certainly too weighty—too massy with the bullion of original thought—ever to have realised the idea of a great popular orator—one who 'wielded at will a fierce democracy,' and ploughed up the great deeps of sentiment and party strife, or national animosities,

like a Levanter or a monsoon. In the School of Plato, in the *palæstra Stoicorum*, such an orator might be potent; not in *fæce Romali.*"

Or under intense patriotic feeling and sympathy with the sufferings of a people, to have written this:—

"It is a favourite doctrine with some of the radical reformers (thanks be to God, not with all) to vilify and disparage the war with France from 1793 to 1815, not (as might perhaps be consistently done) during some of its years, but throughout and unconditionally—in its objects, its results, its principles. Even contemplating the extreme case of a conquest by France, some of the radicals maintain that we should not have suffered much; that the French were a civilised people; that, doubtless, they (here, however, it was forgotten that they were not the French people, but the French army) would not have abused their power, even supposing them to have gained possession of London. Candid reader! read Duppu's account of the French reign in Rome; *any* account of Davoust's in Hamburg; *any* account of Junot's in Lisbon."

And precisely as the facts of history—in which his remarkably retentive memory made him *facile princeps*—were regarded by him as of value in the degree in which they aided a solution of the problems of the day; so exactly with literature—the classics were with him of value only as they could yield commentary on the greater literature (as he held it) of his own land. He has been called pedantic; but with slight reason. If his mode of speech might sometimes savour overmuch of clas-

sical reference, his spirit was anti-pedantic. He regarded it as a peculiar privilege that in early life all his sensibilities had been laid hold of by the greatness of our own literature; and his whole influence was given to upholding its proper place, and to reducing, by all legitimate means, the overweening favour felt in high places for the Greek and Latin authors. "It is, indeed, a pitiable spectacle," he says in one place, "to any man of sense and feeling who happens to be really familiar with the golden treasures of his own ancestral literature, and a spectacle which moves alternately scorn and sorrow, to see young people squandering their time and painful study upon writers not fit to unloose the shoe's latchet of many amongst their own compatriots; making painful and remote voyages after the drossy refuse, when the pure gold lies neglected at their feet."

Devoted as he was to Homer, at one place he exclaims:—"Show me a piece of Homer's handiwork that comes within a hundred leagues of that divine prologue to the Canterbury Tales, or of the Knight's Tale, or The Man of Law's Tale, or of the Tale of the Patient Griseldis." He makes bold to hint at the not very creditable reason for this affected and exaggerated preference:—"As must ever be the case with readers not sufficiently master of a language, to bring the true pretensions of a work to any test of *feeling*, they are for ever mistaking for some pleasure conferred by the writer, what is in fact the pleasure naturally attached to the sense of a difficulty overcome." And to this very acute and explicit passage, which could never have come from the

pen of one who was not an independent thinker as well as a great Grecian, he adds this note: "There can be no doubt that this particular mistake has been a chief cause of the vastly exaggerated appreciation of much that is mediocre in Greek literature."

Even in the lower range of eloquence and rhetoric, he sees reason to magnify our own English authors. Where among the writers of Greece or Rome, he asks, will you find anything to match the opening passage of Sir Thomas Browne's urn-burial, beginning:—"Now, since these bones have rested quietly in the grave, under the drums and tramplings of three conquests," &c.

He may be right or wrong in his opinion here—that is another matter altogether; his opinion, so expressed, is enough for illustration of our present position.

Referring to one point on which he has been frequently criticised, Mr. Minto makes these admirably just and pointed remarks:—

"His dogmatic judgments of Plato, Cicero, Dr. Johnson, and other eminent men, and his strong expression of natural and political prejudice, are sometimes quoted as signs of a tendency to domineer. It may safely be asserted, that whoever takes up this view has not penetrated far into the peculiar personality of De Quincey. Whatever might be the strength of his experiences—and these were often exaggerated for comic effect—there have been few men of equal power more unaffectedly open to reasonable conviction. When he had made up his mind, he took a pleasure, usually a humorous pleasure, in

putting his opinion as strongly as possible; but that was no index as regarded his susceptibility to new light. This we may reasonably infer from his character as revealed in his works; and if we need further evidence, we have it in the words of his personal acquaintance, Mr. Burton, who speaks of his 'gentle and kindly' spirit, and his boyish ardour at making a new discovery. Equally mistaken is the charge of jealousy, which comes from some admirers of Wordsworth and Coleridge. He always, and with obvious sincerity, professed an admiration for the extraordinary qualities of these men, but he knew exactly where their strength lay; he knew that both were men of special strength, combined with special infirmity; and in his 'Recollections' of them, while doing all justice to their merits, he did not scruple to expose their faults. On this ground he is charged with jealousy. But before we admit a charge so inconsistent with what we know of his character otherwise, it must be known that his criticisms are unfair, or that they contain anything that can be construed into an evidence of malice. Had De Quincey been a jealous, irritable man, instead of being "gentle and kindly," as he was, the universally-attested arrogance and contemptuous manner of Wordsworth would have driven him to take part with the 'Edinburgh Review,' and in that case the great poet's reputation might have been considerably delayed."

By way of pendant to this well-weighed passage, we will add one remark. Even the worst charge that has ever been preferred against De Quincey—one to which we do not feel that there is any excep-

tional call to plead guilty—*i.e.*, the charge of making too free with the private life of those with whom he had been on terms of intimacy, ought clearly to carry with it a corrective to what has frequently been urged, on the other hand and in the same breath, as a fault—a lack of warm interest in the ordinary concerns of his fellow-men. There are two sorts of gossip—one kindly, proceeding from that simple expression of neighbourly interest, without which life would speedily slide into a dull, monotonous, ant-like round of daily exercises; the other, cynical, morbid, ungentle, mischievous. We maintain that, even in the cases where specific charges have been made, there is so much more of the one than of the other, that any little dipping of the balance to one side is soon set right. A wise reader will not linger over anything that is open to criticism in this regard; it is something that even those who are most bitter in holding forth what they think a weed or two, are so ready to confess that the field has produced so many beautiful flowers.

Notwithstanding De Quincey's remarkably quick perceptions of natural beauty, and his dependence on the suggestion of various outward manifestations for the full return of certain moods, at once the deepest and most evanescent, he has given us few descriptions of nature proper and for its own sake. He loves to look at nature through a veil of human association. This may often be of the most gossamery nature; but there assuredly it is; constantly diverting his eye from the more prominent objects in the landscape. Even the human interest that lies in a name will divert him. In the opening of the Essay

on Bentley, we have what promises to be an exquisite picture of Watenlath in Cumberland; but it all too soon reveals itself—that the little sketch was introduced in a really original way, to point an old moral, that in the loveliest scenes

"Man alone is vile."

And yet he is no cynic; it is the gentler emotions, the better passions, that he loves to show forth, and he is drawn into such reflections by the stern call of truth. Though not a "word-painter," as the common idea runs, he is full of suggestions on the true moods in which to enjoy nature, and on their cultivation. At one place, for example, he says very wisely:—"It is of great importance for the enjoyment of any natural scene, to be liberated from the necessity of viewing it under circumstances of haste and anxiety; to have it in one's power to surrender one's self passively and tranquilly to the influences of the object as they gradually reveal themselves; and to be under no summons to crowd one's whole visual energy and task of examination within a single quarter of an hour."

A short time before the preparation of the "Collected Works" was begun, a paper of an original, if not unique character, was forwarded to the editor of "Hogg's Instructor," and duly appeared in the columns of that magazine. It was written by a German, who, having read the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," was so struck by it, that he at once set about possessing himself of all that had been written by the same author. In his own quaintly realistic way, this German tells of his

difficulties and disappointments, and how at last he succeeded; but he intersperses his account with so much keen criticism and appreciative remark, that his paper may be taken as presenting, in spite of its off-hand and easy style, something of a "German estimate;" and as such we here present it in its original form:—

"DER ENGLISCHE OPIUMESSER."

A Fragment from a German.

Many years ago—many enough to give me a wondrously kind fellow-feeling in Horace's *Eheu fugaces, Posthume, Posthume!*—when I first essayed the study of English under the tutelage of Professor S——, I was advised by that worthy philologian, if I wished to attain anything like a philosophical acquaintance with that language, to pay particular and scrupulous attention to the writings of Thomas de Quincey. At his instigation, I got the only work of that gentleman procurable at that time, and in that place (Bonn), viz., the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," and was, of course, struck with the vigour, the pathos, the humour, the psychological subtlety, the logical acumen, the imaginative wealth, and the felicitous "word-painting" of that strangest of autobiographies. My admiration was—again I may say, *of course*—increased and deepened by further study of the narrative, together with growing familiarity with the language over which it exercises so comprehensive a sway, so consummate a mastery; and hence I became more and more anxious to procure whatever other writings the Opium-Eater might

have given to the world. Professor S—— had *bid* me, by all means, study his *opera omnia.* Had he written much? was my inquiry. Much every way, was the reply; both in quantity and quality; *multa et multum.* In vain, however, did I make search at our libraries and foreign booksellers for the complete series for which my head and heart yearned so beseechingly. One bibliopole vexed me by sending me the æsthetical publications of the French Quatremère de Quincey. Another disappointed me by forwarding a work attributable, indeed, to the real Simon Pure, but upon a subject infinitely repugnant to all my personal predilections and literary antecedents—to wit, "The Logic of Political Economy." Another peremptorily assured me that the "Confessions" were the only production of the Opium-Eater; and, secondly, that the "Logic" was the work of a man who wrote upon nothing but the vexed and vexatious questions of the "Wealth of Nations." By dint of perseverance, I succeeded in "overhauling" "Klosterheim," a novelette of German structure and story, but which did little to magnify my reverence for the object of my research. Now and then, however, in a stray magazine or review of English or Scottish origin, I perused articles which appeared to me marvellously akin in style and sentiment to the "Confessions;" but all intercourse with Professor S—— happening to be at an end, I could not make private assurance doubly sure, and the English whom it was my lot to fall in with were, I am sorry to say, shockingly ignorant of the genealogy of such articles, and of the history of this my model author. And here I cannot but express my

sense of irritation provoked by that author, in not saving me all this trouble by collecting his multifarious writings into some compact and collective form, like other honest and (some of them) infinitely inferior scribes. I knew, for instance, that Thomas Carlyle's papers were originally scattered over numerous periodicals; but I had only to apply for his "Works," and forthwith they reached me in the systematic shape of five uniform volumes. In like manner, I have since procured the similarly published papers of Macaulay, Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, Alison, Henry Taylor, Stephen, Rogers, Lord Mahon, Prescott, Wilson, Hartley Coleridge, Gilfillan, Leigh Hunt, and others. But to gather together those of De Quincey, you must—as I at last discovered—you must toil through successive years of some half-dozen journals, well known in Great Britain by the names of their respective publishers, such as Blackwood, Tait, Macphail, and Hogg; as also the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the "North British Review," and the "London Magazine." Surely it cannot be that writings of such a master—allowing for all their eccentricities, crotchets (*Grillenspielen*), and vagaries—would not command a sale? The affirmative proposition would, to my way of thinking, involve a metaphysical nut to crack unequalled for hardness and impracticability by anything in Hegel or Schelling. But now to drop my first-person singularity, and to say a few words on the subject of this sketch.

* In the cloud-world (*die Nebelwelt*) of dreams, when deep sleep falleth on man, and his thoughts wander through eternity, and he cannot tell whence they come or whither they go—our own Jean Paul is

reputed the arch-dreamer (*Erzträumer*). But I question whether he is not surpassed by De Quincey in the stupendous awe, the oppressive reality, the intense significance, the colossal sublimity of those visions of the night. De Quincey himself somewhere says that Richter is wanting in the severe simplicity, the horror of the *too much*, belonging to Grecian architecture, which is essential to the perfection of a dream considered as a work of art; that, in short, he is too elaborate to realise the grandeur of the shadowy. However this may be, the critic is at least competent to pass judgment, and may preface and ratify his criticism with an *experto crede*. In a sense very different from that of Pope, in the "Dunciad," has the goddess of dreams

> "O'er his anointed head,
> With mystic words, the sacred opium shed."

The whole earth, it has been said, every night about twelve o'clock, becomes a vast lunatic asylum—with one providential precaution, that the same power which lets loose our minds ties down our hands and feet: there is a train of past associations moving on, and linked into each other by innumerable unseen filaments; and there are animal movements also going on at the same time, which produce impressions on the internal nerves and convey them to the brain; and from the collisions, crossings, and combinations of these two trains, under no other guidance upon the railroad of human consciousness, there arise that terrible crash and confusion which we call madness and dreaming. But upon this railroad there are travellers of every degree, and De Quincey always

monopolises a special engine, and journeys express, at a rate illimitable by the time-table of mechanical clerks and parliamentary trains, ay, and of pursy first-class travellers to boot. His dreams, while we at once recognise their truthfulness and reality, are *sui generis;* they are illuminated by a dim religious light that "never was on sea or land." They sanctify the low with the lofty. They harmonise the incoherent, so that we see a thousand discrepant fancies

> "By down-lapsing thought
> Stream onward, lose their edges, and so creep,
> Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and brought
> Into the gulfs of sleep."

Sometimes the dreams are blended with appalling associations—encompassed with the hour and power of darkness—shrouded with the mysteries of death and the gloom of the grave. Sometimes they are pervaded with unimaginable horrors of Oriental imagery and mythological tortures: the dreamer is oppressed with tropical heat and vertical sunlight, and brings together all the physical prodigies of China and Hindostan. He runs into pagodas, and is fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; he flees from the wrath of Brahma through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hates him; Seeva lays wait for him; he comes suddenly on Isis and Osiris; he has done a deed, they say, at which the ibis and the crocodile tremble; he is buried for a thousand years in stone coffins with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. Anon there dawns upon him a day—as he expresses it in his solemnly impassioned manner

—"a day of crisis and of final hope for human nature, then suffering some mysterious eclipse and labouring in some dread extremity: somewhere, he knew not where—somehow, he knew not how—by some beings, he knew not whom" (if you, reader, know anything to excel this in dream-literature, you have the advantage of *me*)—"a battle, an agony, a strife was conducting—was evolving like a great drama or piece of music; with which his sympathy was the more insupportable, from his confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. He, as is usual in dreams (where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement), had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. He had the power, if he could raise himself, to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon him, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt." But I cannot trust myself to continue the fascinating work of quotation—even of a dream from w ich he awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, "I will sleep no more!" Surely never did man, like this man, realise the Shakespearian phrase, "the fierce vexation of a dream." And well may we fancy that in those days, happily bygone, when the opium tyranny was upon him, his nightly prayer must have been like Banquo's:—

> "A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
> And yet I would not sleep. Merciful Power!
> Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature
> Gives way to in repose!"

For his fate resembled that of Byron's Manfred, when the voice of Incantation rang in his ears:—

"Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
These are shades which will not vanish,
These are thoughts thou canst not banish,
And to thee shall night deny
All the quiet of her sky."

The last couplet, however, would seem wanting in applicability, if literally understood; for the Opium-Eater has the credit of having been very heterodox in his observance of the times and seasons of repose, interpreting them by contraries. Thus the Ettrick Shepherd addresses him in one of the "Noctes:" "Mr. de Quinshy, you and me leeves in twa different warlds, and yet it's wonnerfu' hoo we understan' ane anither sae weel's we do—quite a phenomena. When I'm soopin', you're breakfastin'; when I'm lyin' doun, after your coffee you're risin' up; as I'm coverin' my head wi' the blankets, you're pittin' on your breeks; as my een are steekin' like sunflowers aneath the moon, yours are glowin' like twa gas-lamps; and while your mind is masterin' poleetical economy and metapheesics, in a desperate fecht wi' Ricawrdo and Cant, I'm heard by the nicht-wanderin' fairies snorin' trumpet-nosed through the land o' Nod." Are not these the characteristics to charm my countrymen? I have often marvelled, indeed, that De Quincey is not an idol amongst us, so analogous is his psychological temperament, in many notable respects, to our national type. But then he must be read in his own language, for a spell lies in his *ipsissima verba.* This may be one cause of his faint hold upon us; and possibly another may be the round terms in

which he ridicules us and our literature, albeit he has, in point of fact, done very much to secure for that literature a respectful reception in his native land.

✕ Fain would I linger over the "Confessions," and tell how his visions varied—how at one time he gazed on such pomp of cities and palaces as was never yet beheld by waking eye, unless in the clouds—at another, on silvery expanses of water—at another, on a rocking sea paved with innumerable human faces, imploring, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries, till, in infinite agitation, his mind tossed and surged with the ocean. Or that dream of quite melting pathos and holy serenity, when it was Easter Sunday in the East, and very early in the morning—nigh unto Jerusalem—when his eye rested upon a form, sitting on a stone, and shaded by Judæan palms. Ah, is *not* De Quincey also among the poets? At least he sings melody of the rarest and the sweetest to *my* inmost spirit. But I must pass on; dreaming is perhaps contagious. (Methinks I hear his *aside* —Not such dreaming as *that*, my dear sir!) ✕

Now for his other works: *pauca verba.* "Klosterheim" and the "Logic of Political Economy" I have alluded to. His contributions to periodicals sweep over a vast area of topics. The most compendious and not the least correct of possible titles for them would be, *De omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.* They might be divided into historical, biographical, critical, political, personal, and miscellaneous. Under the first head come his papers on the Cæsars, Cicero, Herodotus, the

Essenes, Secret Societies, Christianity, the Calmuck Tartars, &c. Under the second, those on Coleridge and Society at the Lakes, Kant, Goethe, Milton, Pope, Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Bentley, Parr. Under the third, those on Bennett's Ceylon, Mure's Modern Greece, James's Charlemagne, Lessing's Laocoon, Landor's Works, Schlosser's Literary History, Plato's Republic, Nichol's System of the Heavens, Gilfillan's Gallery of Literary Portraits, the Poetry of Wordsworth, Homer and the Homeridæ, Whately's Rhetoric, and a host besides. Under the fourth, those on the Aristocracy of England, China, and the Opium Question, the Canton Expedition, the Irish Repeal Agitation, the English Corn Laws, Hints for the Hustings, &c. Under the fifth, those on his Autobiography, the exquisitely-affecting Suspiria de Profundis, and the Sketches from Childhood. Under the last, comes a delicious miscellany, including treatises and *jeux d'esprit*, wandering from Casuistry to the King of Haiti, from War to Style, from Protestantism to Dinner Real and Reputed, from Antigone to Lord Carlisle, from Joan of Arc to Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts, from Miracles to a Templar's Dialogues, from Logic to the Sphinx's Riddle, from a Household Wreck to the Literature of his Infancy, from the Nautico-Military Nun of Spain to a Vision of Sudden Death, from Greece under the Romans to the English Mail Coach. His intellect is omnivorous. All is, or is treated as, fish that comes to his net; if for no other purpose, at least to be called over the coals. His memory is prodigious. Like the man in "Juvenal," he can tell you, at a moment's notice, all about

"Nutricem Anchisæ, nomen patriamque novercæ
Anchemoli; dicet quot Acestes vixerit annos,
Quot Siculus Phrygibus vini donaverit urnas,"

and an infinity of similar *minutiæ*. Whatever subject he takes up, he invests with characteristic attractions of depth, scholarship, imagination, wit, and humour. He combines the seldom harmonising elements of severe logical precision and florid fancy. Archdeacon Hare calls him "the great logician of our times." * His writings evidence an almost

"Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassioned logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course."

"Oh, Mr. North, Mr. North," shouts the Shepherd in another of the "Noctes"—when De Quincey is about to refute one of his post-prandial propositions —"I'm about to fa' into Mr. de Quinshy's hauns, sae come to my assistance, for I canna thole bein' pressed up backwards, step by step, intill a corner,

* This is in "Guesses at Truth," p. 333, edition of 1871, where Archdeacon Hare writes:—"So deplorable was the dearth of thought in England after the death of Burke, that, while Godwin's deeper fallacies were scarcely touched by his opponents, they buoyed themselves up with the notion that he had been overthrown by the bulkiest instance of an *ignoratio elenchi* in the whole history of pseudo-philosophy—the "Essay on Population;" a work which may have merits in other respects, but which, with reference to its primary object, the refutation of Condorcet and Godwin, is utterly impotent, all its arguments proceeding on a hypothesis totally different from that which it undertakes to impugn, as has been convincingly shown by the great logician of our times in one of the "Notes from the Pocket-book of an English Opium-Eater."—Ed.

till an argument that's ca'd a clencher clashes in your face, and knocks your head wi' sic' force against the wa' that your crown gets a clour, leavin' a dent in the wainscoat." Nothing of the kind can excel the richness of his philosophical language, the jewelled panoply of his style. It does indeed bristle with scholasticisms—but how they *tell!* You feel, as you read, that here is a man who has gauged the potentiality of every word he makes use of—who has analysed the simples of his every compound phrase. Our philosophical vocabulary owes him many a winged word, and phrases which "a while back were scattered about promiscuously, as if they all stood for pretty much the same thing, he has stamped afresh, so that people begin to have some notion of their meaning." There are critics who complain of his discursive tendency, a complaint to which I can in no sense subscribe. John Foster, the celebrated essayist, has made similar strictures on Coleridge, whose surpassing subtlety he describes as constantly descrying the most unobvious relations, and detecting the most veiled aspect of things; tempting him to depart from the main line of his thought, to indulge in collateral matter; so that, after advancing one acute thought, and another, and another, he perceives among these primary ideas so many secondary ones—so many bearings, distinctions, and analogies—so many pointings towards subjects infinitely remote—that in the attempt to seize and fix in words these secondary thoughts, he will suspend for a good while the progress toward the intended point. This is true of Coleridge's distinguished disciple, and, let me add, benefactor. But let those who will cavil at the series

of digressions and parentheses in which he indulges. On the other hand, I revel in them. Never do I feel disposed to quarrel with this peripatetic instinct. De Quincey himself calls it an intermitting necessity affecting his particular system, like that of migration that affects swallows. "Nobody," says he, "is angry with swallows for vagabondising periodically, and surely I have a better right to indulgence than a swallow: I take precedency of a swallow in any company whatsoever." This very quality must (*me saltem judice*) impart a singular charm to his conversation —an art of which he is so renowned a master. Much would I give, and far would I pilgrimise, to hear him exemplify in talk the *nil tangit quod non ornat.* By all accounts

> "His talk is like a stream which runs
> With rapid change from rocks to roses;
> It slips from politics to puns;
> It glides from Mahomet to Moses;
> Beginning with the laws which keep
> The planets in their radiant courses,
> And ending with some precept deep
> For dressing eels or shoeing horses."

This *magister sententiarum*, this dreamer of dreams, has acquired a strange power over my inner life, arousing within, as perhaps no other prose writer has done, thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears. As, on the one hand, he excites my mirth to a boisterous pitch, by his grave whimsicalities, his logical "quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles," ay, and even by his slang, which is so gentlemanly even in its excesses—so, on the other hand, he sways my spirit to and fro, to the very top of his bent, by his

sublime pathos. How grand and awe-inspiring is the melancholy of his retrospective glances! How fearfully he makes one feel

"This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

So that one is tempted to continue the strain—

"Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof."

My heart is full enough to bid him a cordial and grateful farewell—too full to continue a rhapsody about him and all his works. *Jam satis superque* of my Teutonic babble.

We have spoken of the dependence of De Quincey's sensibilities on certain sensuous gratifications; and this leads us shortly to speak of his exceeding delight in the pleasures of the ear, and his opium-eating—two points the more demanding notice from us in that both have left unmistakeable manifestations in his writings.

I. Though we shall speak of some points of style hereafter, it may be permitted us to remark here, as revealing a personal characteristic, that his exceeding care for cadence in his writing, in any movement the least impassioned, shows a distinct and special artistic instinct. His "poetic prose" is in the good, and not in the sinister sense, musical—that is, it moves by defined gradations, and rests on a distinct principle of opposition of clauses, giving balance and harmony. This effect might be formally gained as the result of mere study; but the peculiarity of

De Quincey's case is, that here instinct went hand-in-hand with rule, and his style submits and harmonises itself, as we have said, with the motive or scale of impressions to be interpreted. To those who are able to appreciate this point, which, however, requires at once an originally musical ear, and long tutoring to the survey of sentences in their structural wholeness, it will hardly seem too much to modify and apply to himself the words he applied to another—"The strife and fluctuation of his thoughts and emotions in the grander of his opium-dreams maintain their alternations with a force and inevitable recurrence, like the systole and diastole, the contraction and expansion, of some living organ." That we are not wrong in this might almost be proved by the fact that, implicitly in his judgment of style, the musical element was the one that he was first affected by. It was this which had drawn him to Coleridge, which had, when he was yet a mere boy, made the study of Euripides a luxury to him. It was the one thing that he desiderated in Lamb and in his writings; and though it must be confessed that, like his hesitancy of speech, the jerky and unbalanced nature of Lamb's writing, irregular and without structure as it was, in some indefinable way aided his peculiar wit, coming as it did for the most part suddenly, and in separate flashes; yet the least sense of music would have certainly led him to impart somewhat more of variety to his essays in point of mere sentence-structure. With peculiar conviction De Quincey has put this on record:—

"The sense of music as a pleasurable sense, or as any sense at all other than of certain unmeaning

and impertinent differences in respect to high and low, sharp or flat, was utterly obliterated as with a sponge by nature herself from Lamb's organisation. Rhythm or pomp of cadence, or sonorous ascent of clauses, in the structure of sentences, were effects of art as much thrown away on *him* as the voice of the charmer upon the deaf adder. We ourselves, occupying the very station of polar opposition to that of Lamb, being as morbidly perhaps in the one excess as he in the other, naturally detected this omission in Lamb's nature at an early stage of our acquaintance."

And nothing was with De Quincey limited in its interest of application to literature merely. It is here the case with the pleasures of the ear, as we have already found it to be with many other things. This is how the presence or absence of certain rhythmic sounds came to affect him, as modifying even the impression of natural solitudes:—

"In northern England there are no sheep-bells, which is an unfortunate defect as regards the full impression of wild solitudes, whether amongst undulating heaths or towering rocks; at any rate, it is so felt by those who, like myself, have been trained to its soothing effects upon the hills of Somersetshire —the Cheddar, the Mendip, or the Quantock—or any other of those breezy downs which once constituted such delightful local distinctions for four or five counties in that south-west angle of England. At all hours of the day or night this silvery tinkle was delightful; but after sunset, in the solemn hour of gathering twilight, heard (as it always was) intermittingly, and at great varieties of distance, it formed

the most impressive incident for the ear, and the most in harmony with the other circumstances of the scenery, that perhaps anywhere exists—not excepting even the natural sounds, the swelling and dying intonations of insects wheeling in their vesper flights. Silence and desolation are never felt so profoundly as when they are interrupted by solemn sounds, recurring by uncertain intervals and from distant places. But in these Westmoreland heaths and uninhabited ranges of hilly ground too often nothing is heard, except occasionally the wild cry of a bird—the plover, the snipe, or perhaps the raven's croak. The general impression is therefore cheerless; and the more you are rejoiced when, looking down from some one of the eminences which you have been gradually ascending, you descry, at a great depth below, the lovely lake of Coniston. The head of this lake is the part chiefly interesting, both from the sublime character of the mountain barriers, and from the intricacy of the little valleys at their base. The approach from Ambleside or Hawkshead, though fine, is far less so than that from Grasmere, through the valley of Tilberthwaite, to which, for a *coup de théâtre*, I recollect nothing equal. Taking the left-hand road, so as to make for Mark Coniston, and not for Church Coniston, you ascend a pretty steep hill, from which, at a certain point of the little gorge or *hawse* (*i.e.*, *hals*, neck or throat—viz., the dip in any hill through which the road is led), the whole lake, of six miles in length, and the beautiful foregrounds, all rush upon the eye with the effect of a pantomimic surprise—not by a graduated revelation, but by an instantaneous flash." *

The influence of music, as it affected his literary product, is indeed manifest; and to trace it out fully would require at once great sympathy and the nicest knowledge of technical points. That lies beyond our capability; but we may, we think, quite justifiably insert under this head his own confession of his dependence on musical association and suggestion:—

"A chorus of elaborate harmony, displayed before me, as in a piece of arras work, the whole of my past life—not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present, and incarnated in the music: no longer painful to dwell upon: but the detail of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction; and its passions exalted, spiritualised, and sublimed."

In connection with this special experience, he thus endeavours to make clear the philosophic principle exhibited in it:—

"The mistake of most people is to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and, therefore, that they are purely passive to its effects. But this is not so; it is by the reaction of the mind upon the notices of the ear (the *matter* coming by the sense, the *form* from the mind), that the pleasure is constructed; and therefore it is that people of equally good ear differ so much in this point from one another. Now opium, by greatly increasing the activity of the mind, generally increases, of necessity, that particular mode of its activity by which we are able to construct out of the raw material of organic sound an elaborate intellectual pleasure."

As the power of gratifying this peculiar musical appetite was made possible to him in the London opera at a time when the opium experiences were

passing through a transforming phase, we are surely not passing beyond the region of sound criticism into that of mere conjecture when we suggest, whether it might not be that something of his exceptional experience of opium in preserving the moral affections in a state of clearness and elevation, might not be due in some degree to this sensibility to musical impression, happily gratified at a critical time.

The peculiar power of the ear for the musical affinities by words, and the subtle processes of association by remoter analogies, were, as we take it, the main elements in his wonderful memory. We notice this point here, because we are not sure that the musical element was not the more efficient element of the two in this remarkable result. Even his tenacious record of dates, the reader will have noticed, was not the outcome of mere memory, but rather the flower of an imaginative process by which certain sounds actually became the symbols of memorable events—the eighteenth of June, the glorious day of Waterloo, the twenty-first of October, the memorable day of Trafalgar, and so on—the very sounds carrying with them imperishable and great suggestions. He, at all events, would not have deemed himself complimented had he been praised for a vast Jedidiah-Buxton-like memory for figures, facts, or words. He has himself given his own *rationale* of it in one of his sketches:—

"Rarely do things perish from my memory that are worth remembering. Rubbish perishes instantly. Hence it happens that passages in Latin or English poets, which I never could have read but once (and *that* thirty years ago), often begin to

blossom anew when I am lying awake unable to sleep. I become a distinguished compositor in the darkness; and, with my aërial composing-stick, sometimes I 'set up' half a page of verses, which would be found tolerably correct if collated with the volume that I never had in my hand but once. I mention this in no spirit of boasting. Far from it; for, on the contrary, among my mortifications have been compliments to my memory, when, in fact, any compliments that I had merited were due to the higher faculty of an electric aptitude for seizing analogies, and by means of these aërial pontoons passing over like lightning from one topic to another.

"Still it is a fact that this pertinacious life of memory for things that simply touch the ear does, in fact, beset me. Said but once, said but softly, not marked at all, words revive before me in darkness and solitude; and they arrange themselves gradually into sentences, but through an effort, sometimes of a distressing kind, to which I am in a manner forced to become a party."

The very word "guardian," he confesses in another place, kindles a fiery thrilling in his nerves; so much was that special power of guardianship, as wielded by one of four, concerned in the sole capital error of his boyhood.

II. We now pass to the consideration of opium in relation to De Quincey's mind and character. Whether or not we may be disposed to qualify somewhat his assertions of the early awakening in his childhood of sensibilities and ideas that in normal cases lie latent till early adolescence, if in some cases they are ever properly developed at all, there can be no doubt

whatever that his imagination and the whole range of his poetic perceptions were awakened whilst he was yet a mere child of four or five at most. Ideas of time, of life, of death, and their ineffable mysteries, had even thus early, in opposition to Wordsworth's teaching, surged in upon his dawning intelligence. Unlike Hawthorne in many things, he was certainly like him in this, that "his fancy ripened prematurely, and taught him secrets he could not otherwise have known." His circumstances were such as to repress the tendency rather than to encourage it. True, he expresses his gratitude that he was mostly brought up amidst gentle sisters rather than among rough brothers; but how generally is this position only taken advantage of by a healthy thoughtless boy that he may play the petty tyrant with impunity. But if he had been constitutionally less sensitive, less premature, that slight experience of tyranny from his elder brother might have awakened in him something wholly different from that "passion for being despised" of which he tells us; and his mother's severe, Puritanic habit of mind, which had been confirmed by contact with members of the Clapham sect, and by the reading of the literature most in fashion amongst them, would certainly have tended to form a very different style of character, had not the native direction of his energies been as decided as they were in quality delicate. That reverence for the individual will which we have seen operating in his boyhood, and driving him—the very gentlest of boys—to face the desolateness of Wales and the hunger of London rather than yield himself up on his guardian's terms, betokens a

peculiar self-dependence in certain directions. Now, where such elements of determination are present, the inevitable result of early acquiescence in the ordinary and formal regulations of life is to obliterate the vague and early dreams of beauty and wonder which may be presumed to be common to childhood, however early they may be erased in the consciousness—a point which the "Ode to Childhood" may be said to have made a commonplace, though it is but a revived Platonism. Had De Quincey proceeded to Oxford at the time he wished, instead of going to Manchester, his whole life might have taken a different development. Very strong indeed must be the character which could resist the attractive power of the current of undergraduate life. To live apart from it, how were it possible for a youth, unless indeed he brought with him the weight of outward experiences as strange and anomalous as anything De Quincey had dreamed? Before he had finished his first year at Oxford—a year of isolation and great suffering, as he tells us—he had tasted opium in the hope of relief from neuralgic pains. Under its influence the whole of his infancy revived itself, even in his waking consciousness. According to his own account of his earlier experiences, the opium, as it purified the moral affections, elevated the imagination, gave to it also a larger scope, a power to re-create the experiences and phantasies of infancy, already becoming dim. It is noticeable that he distinctly tells us the first revelations of opium at Oxford were solely of this character. And though, under the necessary pains that emerge from the indulgence of anything in excess, these came to be complicated and

mixed up with other impressions, yet a certain law and order prevail, which do for them precisely what the application of the most rigid law of art would have done—and that results simply from the central idea of childhood, and its purity and love and mystery, obtaining everywhere. The constant emergence of the death-chamber of his little sister, and of Ann of Oxford Street, imparts a sweet, near, natural, and also a grand semi-mystic air; and it is to this, as we have said, that the general influence of these dreams of De Quincey is mainly due. Let no reader suppose that we justify opium indulgence. *Far from it.* We here speak of the effect of opium only in its earlier stages, and before it was used by him to counteract the evils which had been originated by itself. And let no man fancy that the use of opium will make him a glorious dreamer, or inspire him with poetry. What we say is, that it may help a man of deep sensibilities, and with the dreaming propensity profoundly vested in his constitution, to revive more clearly in the consciousness what else had almost faded out of it, as Mr. James Montgomery says; and this it did in De Quincey's case. We are now merely trying to trace out and estimate what we may regard as due to the "ministry of opium" in the body of dream-literature which De Quincey has left to us; and this, we presume to think, comes pretty near to it. The cloudy grandeur; the mystic and far-withdrawn beauty of his imagery; the presence of the most ideal forms along with the almost pathetic counter-presence of the most real forms, transmuted and spiritualised, yet real and recognisable,—this is the chief peculiarity of these earlier

dreams, and the opium influence is, we think, traceable in it. . This it is that gives them such power over readers generally, dimly awakening in their consciousness the echo, as it were, of a sweet, distant, long-forgotten strain, which it may be they have only hitherto heard in sleep, but which sets an indefinable charm even about the ways of that secret life for many days. This is of the essence of poetic impression, and so far as we derive these impressions from De Quincey, we are compelled to regard him as at least in near alliance with poets like Keats and Shelley, Chenièr and Schiller.

If De Quincey was right in attributing to the rough treatment of his brother a beneficial awakening and withdrawal from his dreamy seclusion, we may perhaps attribute to the circumstances which led him to opium, the more efficient revival of those earlier impressions of a dream-world beyond the actual and tangible, and apart from it, which were in some danger of fading from his mind under rude contact with the world. The slaves in the West Indies considered death as a passport to their native country: dream was the one doorway by which De Quincey could pass into his native land of childish phantasy. Opium, at first, at all events, reconciled what the rude usage had dispelled, or threatened to dispel; and whatever may fall to be urged against opium in the abstract, and *taken in the great excess into which both De Quincey and Coleridge were tempted*, it would ill become any one who prizes the special quality of the gift either has brought to us from the dim land of dream, to look at them only with the eye of the stern moralist when they yielded

too deeply to the seduction of that potent drug, which soothed not only sensitive shattered nerves, but had once so recomposed them as to become the agent of elevating delights for us and for future generations. De Quincey himself has well traced out the co-efficient causes:—"He who has *really* read the 'Confessions' will be aware that a stricter scrutiny of the past, such as was natural after the whole economy of the dreaming faculty had been convulsed beyond all precedents on record, led me to the conviction that not one agency, but two agencies, had co-operated to the tremendous result. The nursery experience had been the ally and the natural co-efficient of the opium. For that reason it was that the nursery experience has been narrated. Logically it bears the same relation to the convulsions of the dreaming faculty as the opium. The idealising tendency existed in the dream-theatre of my childhood; but the preternatural strength of its action and colouring was first developed after the confluence of the *two* causes." And he elsewhere adds:—"The minutest incidents of childhood were often revived. I could not be said to recollect them; for, if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But, placed as they were before me in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognised* them instantaneously."

One word we must add here. To us it seems as though both the experiences bred of the rough usage which compelled him to a sense of the stern qualities

of the real world, and the experiences bred of the opium by which he reopened for himself the gate of dreams, were necessary to produce the character—so shrewd and so kindly, yet so solitary and full of sorrow; so radiant of sympathy and sensitive to the finest thrill of emotion, yet so unaffected by many forms of sympathy; with so keen an eye for many of the problems of life, and so able to lay down rules for action, yet himself so incapable of action under any practical rule; and exhibiting at every point that gentleness and benign intelligence which usually proceed only from large and wise commerce with mankind, built on a foundation of genial nature and deep-rooted good sense.*

There is yet another point which may not unfitly be noticed here. In the movement of De Quincey's powers, and that in his highest moments, there is evidently a remarkable detachment of the intellect from the dreaming faculty. During the most absorbing succession of images, his intellect, as it were, takes up a station apart, carefully observes and compares. He is at once creative and self-analysing. Those elusive and impalpable shades of feeling, which most men remember but can in nowise define—those images which seem only half-born, and which flit in a debateable land, like the mystic state between sleeping and waking—were with De Quincey definite realities which he could deal with, recalling and representing them almost at will. * If his life, as has been said in a certain place, were all a dream or a vision, it was a dream which he made real to himself by his power to reconstruct it. And the interest of the phenomenon is increased when we

come to perceive that the intellect employed in this service lost thereby little of its edge for dealing with a certain order of practical relations—as seen in his passion for political economy, not to speak of other matters. * * There can be no doubt that the balance, which in his case might so easily have been disturbed, under specific pains, in union with other causes, leading to morbid preoccupations, as he himself feared was to be his fate at Oxford, was to a certain extent, at all events, maintained in true adjustment by his experiences in the earliest stages of opium-eating. And this the more especially that, by the aid derived from it, he was enabled at a most critical period to study with enjoyment the great English authors while yet his sense of natural simplicity and genuine power was fresh and keen. There is no position but has its advantages and disadvantages. When De Quincey writes of the "pains of opium," it would be simply and only harrowing if he had not also been able to tell of its pleasures and benefits. It is to these only that we now refer. * *

And this is hardly going a step further than a distinguished physician, who was not likely to take other than a scientific view of the case, is distinctly inclined to go, as we shall see on a later page, when he expresses his firm belief that it "helped to keep active and entire during so many long years of bodily feebleness that large and constant-working brain—in a word, that it fed it," and saved De Quincey from one of the worst trials of the student,—severe headaches; a kind of suffering to which he was a stranger.

De Quincey himself directly endorses this point:—

"The expansion of the benigner feelings incident to opium is no febrile access (like that in the case of wine), but a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation of pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of a heart originally just and good. . . . The Opium-Eater (*I speak of him who is not suffering from any disease or other remote effects of opium*) feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount; that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity, and over all is the great light of the majestic intellect."

Somewhat to our surprise, we find him confessing that in his youth he laboured under a singular inability to express his thoughts to his satisfaction—another reason, it may be, why he eschewed the ordinary student-society at Oxford. He says that his infirmity in this respect was a cause of great regret to himself; and we are led to infer that the development of his rare powers of expression was a new source of pleasure. And what was true of conversation was true also of writing. "I laboured," he says, "like a sibyl instinct with the burden of prophetic woe, as often as I found myself dealing with a topic in which the understanding combined with deep feeling to suggest mixed and tangled thoughts." We have no direct statement from himself as to the effect which was produced upon him in this respect by opium; but, as it was admitted by all that his conversation in the earlier years was far more brilliant while he was under that stimulus, it may be that he also owed something to the opium in the full development of the power of language—that

instinct for nicer shades and keen capacity to draw tribute from the commonest and most ordinary phrases. Indeed, his confession, which is so expressive of something absolutely original in character, that even under opium he felt impelled to go out and mix with the crowds of common people in the thronged thoroughfares of London, might, we think, without violence to his own acknowledgments, be brought into a closer relation with a confession he made elsewhere, as showing how, even in the common speech, he found a constant tonic, like iron, for the blood of literature, to check the fantasticality and wire-drawn refinements to which it is constantly exposed in the hands of professed writers and rhetoricians merely. "The market-place and the highway," he says, "are rich seed-plots for the sowing and reaping of many indispensable ideas." And this from the man who has been treated as a writer of gorgeous dictionary-English and impassioned prose only!

Another point naturally arises here, on which a word may be said. It is that of conscience in literature. De Quincey, even while he is dealing with dreams and vagaries, which might be presumed to tempt to great looseness and excursion, keeps his intellect in such direct control that every statement may be said to be checked, looked at in relation to the whole, and each experience in relation to others, bodily to mental, and so on. This is shown in the care with which all the sensational and active effects that accompanied his dream-experiences in the very crises were followed and analysed, and the concern he exhibits that no statement should pass until it had undergone this kind of "verification." What

has surprised the most careful readers is this,—that in a species of writing which might yield itself so easily to mere fanciful "filling up," the continual return on actual events, incidents, and characters, should not seem inconsistent or out of place. It is hardly possible that any mere "invention" could have supplied the links of association, or that anything but a "severe sincerity" could have accomplished it. This sincerity it is, fortifying itself by what might else have seemed the very madness of extremes, which imparts the air of unity and interest to his frank revelations of the workings of his mind both in the "Autobiographic Sketches" and in the "Confessions." The inner life would have been uninteresting from its very remoteness from any ordinary standard, had it not been, for most part, and by deliberate purpose, presented in combination with outward facts and influences which constantly affected and modified it. And this was largely accomplished by the emergence of ordinary sympathies, which linked the life of outer circumstance and the inner experiences together. We see this in his love of children, his pity for the forlorn, and his power of sympathetically placing himself in the position of others. Even his most exceptional experiences take their rise in feelings and sentiments that have *universal* significance and suggestion,—as witness the trance by his sister's corpse, his delusions resulting from his grief for little Kate Wordsworth, and many others. And though his natural tendency is to throw mere outward and material circumstances out of account, the very manner in which he is compelled thus to recognise them in his most

elevated moments, gives a unity and a convincing sense of reality, felt the more the more that we realise his natural repulsion from what pertains solely to that which is physical, sensuous, or outward. Looked at in this way, we feel that even his dreams present evidences of a dominating conscience.

We should not like to follow some writers, and detect the presence of opium influence in some of the masterpieces of the world's nursery literature. But an authority, who is by no means to be set lightly aside, deliberately gave it as his opinion that to opium or narcotic influence we are indebted for the "Arabian Nights:"—

"Those stories seem to every reader like the vast, interminable, and half-connected imagery of a dream. Not that their style is obscure; on the contrary, it is eminently simple, clear, and direct, as to the language itself. But the inimitable tone of assured veracity in which the most improbable events and impossible incidents are narrated is exactly like the process through which the mind passes in a dream—seeing, believing, and connecting together experiences the most opposite in time, quantity, and nature—which all appears as vivid and true as the most simple event of the waking hours."

About the correctness of such a theory as this, opinions may well be divided; but there can be no doubt that opium has played its own part from remote antiquity till now in the production of great imaginative works. Homer has his *nepenthes;* and the poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) was sacred to Somnus, not surely without some reason other than the dull promotion of drowsiness. But passing from

this line of remark, we shall step out of this section by presenting a few sentences from the distinguished French translator of the "Confessions" and "Suspiria" —a criticism which has much of truth and delicacy, though with every expression we do not fully agree. It will be observed that there is no reserve in the praise of these opium-dreams in respect of their remarkable literary quality:—

"Parmi les drogues les plus propres à créer ce que je nomme *l'Idéal artificiel*, laissant de côté les liqueurs, qui poussent vite à la fureur matérielle et terrassent la force spirituelle, et les parfums dont l'usage excessif, tout en rendant l'imagination de l'homme plus subtile, épuise graduellement ses forces physiques, les deux plus énergiques substances, celles dont l'emploi est le plus commode et le plus sous la main, sont le haschisch et l'opium. L'analyse des effets mystérieux et des jouissances morbides que peuvent engendrer ces drogues, des châtiments inévitables qui résultent de leur usage prolongé, et enfin de l'immortalité même impliquée dans cette poursuite d'un faux idéal, constitue le sujet de cette étude.

"Le travail sur l'opium a été fait, et d'une manière si éclatante, médicale et poétique à la fois que je n'oserais rien y ajouter. Je me contenterai donc, dans une autre étude, de donner l'analyse de ce livre incomparable qui n'a jamais été traduit en France dans sa totalité. L'auteur, homme illustre, d'une imagination puissante et exquise, aujourd'hui retiré et silencieux, a osé, avec une candeur tragique, faire le récit des jouissances et des tortures qu'il a trouvées jadis dans d'opium, et la partie la plus

dramatique de son livre est celle où il parle des efforts surhumains de volonté qu'il lui a fallu déployer pour échapper à la damnation à laquelle il s'était imprudemment voué lui-même. . . .

"Dans la dernière partie des 'Suspiria,' il fait encore comme avec plaisir un retour vers les années déjà si lointaines, et ce qui est vraiment précieux, là comme ailleurs, ce n'est pas le fait, mais le commentaire, commentaire souvent noir, amer, désolé; pensée solitaire, qui aspire à s'envoler loin de ce sol et loin du théâtre des luttes humaines; grands coups d'aile vers le ciel; monologue d'une âme qui fut toujours trop facile à blesser. Ici comme dans les parties déjà analysées, cette pensée est le *thyrse* dont il a si plaisamment parlé, avec la candeur d'un vagabond qui se connaît bien. Le sujet n'a pas d'autre valeur que celle d'un baton sec et nu; mais les rubans, les pampres, et les fleurs peuvent être, par leurs entrelacements folâtres, une richesse précieuse pour les yeux. La pensée de De Quincey n'est pas seulement sinueuse; le mot n'est pas assez fort: elle est naturellement spirale. D'ailleurs, ces commentaires et ces réflexions seraient fort longs à analyser, et je dois me souvenir que le but de ce travail était de montrer, par un exemple, les effets de l'opium sur un esprit méditatif et enclin à la réverie. Je crois ce but rempli. Il me suffira de dire que le penseur solitaire revient avec complaisance sur cette sensibilité précoce que fut pour lui la source de tant d'horreurs et de tant de jouissances: sur son amour immense de la liberté, et sur le frisson que lui inspirait la responsibilité."

*
* *

"De Quincey was like Rousseau in one thing—he did not spare himself. He was utterly frank in his confessions, so far as they went, and much of their charm lies in this." The reader will have seen that we have been able to verify not a little even in the "Confessions" by reference to other papers, and find that he did not understate in any matter of fact what it was inevitable he should refer to. Now, with respect to the matter of opium, we find him in 1856 confessing to four separate and signal submissions under its influence. The first was in 1813–16, prior to his marriage; the second immediately after it, in 1817–18; the third in London in 1824–25; and the fourth in the period between 1841–44. We are unable to present exact details relative to the period of 1824–25; he himself, as we have seen, gave full details of the two earlier lapses in his appendix to the first edition of the "Confessions," and of his experiences in the process of reduction; and in the fourth and last instance, we have found jottings amongst his papers, together with the most passionate expressions of his convictions of the evil that *excessive* opium-eating had brought upon him, and these have been given on an earlier page. While, therefore, it would be quite correct for Thomas Hood, as we have seen, to speak of De Quincey in 1825 as drinking opium as another would drink claret ("within that circle none durst *drink* but he"), it is presumably a mistaken repetition of his words to apply them to 1845.

Another thing to bear in mind is, that, in spite of his sympathy with rude life, he was unequal to bear any part in quarrels and bickerings, and could only shyly retreat from them, at whatever cost

to himself. Like Izaak Walton, he loved "peace and quietness," and sometimes he sacrificed too much to obtain them, by escaping from an unpleasant or apparently harsh procedure at the moment, only of course to find it facing him, in a far grimmer aspect, at no distant date. In this respect, he was as simple as a child, and it needs to be admitted at once that alike in giving, in lending, and in the making of bargains, his conduct of his affairs often seemed to border on absolute imbecility.

It would be the extreme of biographical perversion to pretend anything else. He always had boundless expectations of what he could earn by his pen, and at the same time an utter want of power of writing, except when the fit happened to be upon him. His anticipations of the produce of his writings were thus always disappointed. Nevertheless, up to the last moment, it was his habit to fill slips of paper with the most minute jottings of income and expenditure, exhibiting the most modest ideas of living, so far as he himself was concerned, but also betraying a childishly hopeful expectancy of greater productiveness in the future than in the past. In his earlier years he was more prone to act on these ill-founded hopes than later in life; but this arose from the fact that he had come, more and more, to see the necessity of letting his family, in certain things, manage for him.

In 1831, for example, he took a large furnished house in Great King Street, Edinburgh, under a calculation presuming on a steady amount of marketable production. He failed in this; and most of his difficulties in Edinburgh, precipitating him into cir-

cumstances which ever afterwards it caused him exquisite pain to think of, resulted simply from his incapacity to face creditors, and to do what the most ordinary common-sense might have suggested to arrange his affairs on a satisfactory footing. He chose to leave his affairs to arrange themselves. It is simply denied, however, that there was anything more blameworthy than this lack of practicality and business tact, which was, and had all along been, combined with a generosity and a charity so open and unstinted, as might, if it had been dispensed with a view to advertisement, have made him widely known as a philanthropist.

+ Added to all this, as has been said, was his habit of magnifying little daily difficulties into portentous evils from which he needed to escape. These traits, doubtless, had something to do with his change of lodgings in some instances; and, associated with a certain love of novelty and an almost childish liking for mystery in innocent matters, account for much which has been made unjustly to bear a sinister aspect. It needs to be clearly stated, too, that, notwithstanding the appearance of poverty in attire he always presented, he had been wise enough, after a certain date, to leave entirely in the hands of his wife, as he did later in the hands of his daughters, small annuities derived from legacies—first from his father, second from his uncle, Colonel Penson, and third from his mother. It was by these moneys chiefly that a comfortable home was maintained; so that at no period in his later years could it be said that he was either homeless or reduced to beggary or want of ordinary necessaries. Through his own simplicity,

unstinted generosity, and the mismanagement, or worse, of lawyers, a considerable part of what he had originally inherited at one time or other, had been lost; but, happily, enough remained for this. And with reference to the years 1844–46 in particular, the sternest documents are existent to show that throughout the whole of that period he not only did not overdraw his account with "Tait's Magazine," but that through these years a balance lay at his credit, and that sometimes his ordinary payments were allowed to remain in the cashier's hands for months after the dates on which they were due, by his failing to call or to apply for the money. If, then, he ever borrowed sixpences, it is clear that he was not unable to pay them back, and that such borrowings, if we admit they took place, arose from irregularities that showed absence, simplicity, and lack of common prudence; but that he could hardly have been the "sponge" he has in one place been plainly represented to be.

Another point which may have a bearing on certain statements that have recently passed current is this—that those who knew him best never found that it was his habit to usurp the talk or to fall into lengthened monologue. Professor Wilson, Professor [illegible], Mr. Hill Burton, Mr. Jacox, his own daughters, [illegible]hers, all declare that nothing was more [illegible] to his habit. His consideration for others [illegible]is courtesy were too marked to permit this. [illegible]eneral deliverances on the ethics of conversa- [illegible]vould hardly be legitimate to base a positive [illegible]s as to his own actual tendency, but taken [illegible]ion with the clear evidence of those who

knew him well, the following passages on conversation may have a certain weight, as they certainly have a certain autobiographic colouring:—

"The habit of monologue, such as that of Coleridge, lies open to three fatal objections: 1. It is anti-social in a case expressly meant by its final cause for the triumph of sociality; 2. It refuses all homage to women on an arena expressly dedicated to their predominance; 3. It is essentially fertile in *des longueurs*. Could there be imagined a trinity of treasons against the true tone of social intercourse more appalling to, say, a Parisian taste? Having originally a necessity almost morbid for the intellectual pleasures that depend on solitude, I am constitutionally somewhat careless about the luxuries of conversation. I see them, like them, in the rare cases where they flourish, but I do not require them. Yet my deliberate judgment is, that Coleridgian talk, even managed by a Coleridge, defeated the very end of social meetings. Without the excitement from a reasonable number of auditors, and some novelty in the composition of his audience, Coleridge was hardly able to talk his best. Now, at the end of some hours, it struck directly on the good sense of the company—Was it reasonable to have assembl[illegible] ten, or a dozen people for the purpose of [illegible] prelection? Would not the time h[illegible] to more account, even as regarded the v[illegible] which they had substituted for *social* ple[illegible] studying one of Coleridge's printed wor[illegible] *there* the words were stationary and not fl[illegible] that notes might be taken down, and ques[illegible] posed by way of letter on any impenetrabl[illegible]

ties; whereas a stream of oral teaching, which ran like the stream of destiny, was impassive to all attempts at interruption. . . .

"I pity the poor Indian, if he finds (as *I* sometimes do), these three bad returns for his impenetrable politeness: first, that his fellow-interlocutor *profits* by his forbearance, so as to obtain unlimited audience for himself, but thinks not of *improving* by it, so as to allow an undisturbed course to the reply; secondly, translates the immovable politeness into an admiration of his own eloquence, and dispenses it accordingly; thirdly, uses the deep attentive silence, which both is honesty to the argument and courtesy to the person, as a mere handle for saying the same thing sixteen times over—a torment to which my own great practice in composition renders me painfully sensitive. So that now, in practising this rigour of patient listening, which unaffectedly I do uniformly, I suffer often a real martyrdom. I hope there is some wreath of laurel or amaranth in reserve for that really difficult virtue of listening patiently to one who abuses your indulgence immoderately. In that case I have a large arrear of claims to bring forward. I speak of this not in any spirit (though possibly a tone) of jest, for jest it is not. I speak sorrowfully, and also because, in relation to the future, [redacted] reason to speak fearfully. For my unlimited good nature is destined to be a snare for me to the end of my life."

And among the great advantages he had for colloquial purposes, and for engaging the attention of people wiser than himself, he enumerates these:—

"Having the advantage of a prodigious memory,

and the far greater advantage of a logical instinct for feeling in a moment the secret analogies and parallelisms that connected things else apparently remote, I enjoyed these two peculiar gifts for conversation: first, an inexhaustible fertility of topics, and, therefore, of resources for illustrating or for varying any subject that chance or purpose suggested; secondly, a prematurely awakened sense of *art* applied to conversation. I had learned the use of vigilance in evading with civility the approach of wearisome discussions, and in impressing, quietly and oftentimes imperceptibly, a new movement upon dialogues that loitered painfully, or see-sawed unprofitably."

With his irrepressible passion for collecting books and papers, and his utter incapacity to assort them and to dispense with what was useless, we can easily understand how it came about that deposits of papers grew here and there—"snowing him up," as his phrase was—so that he could only betake himself elsewhere helplessly. In two cases, it is true that, owing to this, he found himself in the hands of persons who, though they cleared out the papers, and let the rooms to others, still maintained their claim upon him for the rent during long periods whilst the said papers remained in their custody. Among his letters we find a few memorials of such ca[illegible]aintly amusing to us as we read them, though, doubtless, they were grave enough to him as he wrote them. But even here he did not fail to lighten up his statement of the question by that naïve humour which was so characteristic of him in all his difficulties. The following is part of a letter written to his

daughter Emily in 1855, while she was on a visit to her sister, Mrs. Craig, in Ireland—Mrs. Craig being the "Maggy" referred to as likely to throw light on the distressing problem:—

"What caused my consternation was Miss M——'s demand of one hundred guineas 'and upwards.' It is true that I believe any such debt, even if ever due as to any fraction, to have (in the phrase of Roman Law) 'prescribed.' But—and this is the deadly drawback upon my consolation in that direction—she, this fatal Miss M——, *holds papers and books* of mine. I do not seriously urge this as the mortal sting of the case, because, if it is possible that I do or can really owe her the sum which she alleges, I would assuredly pay her, whether holding or *not* holding any such pledge. I know not how this is. Can Maggy throw any light upon it? Payments, in the meantime, such as I could, I have made to her; somewhere about ten guineas in the last three months."

And if it should be of any interest to our readers to learn De Quincey's own opinion of what, no doubt, was the family of that woman who has been represented as "tracking him from lodging to lodging" and seizing his papers, because of arrears of rent, we subjoin it, in absolute confidence that all the [illegible] be taken out of that foundationless, [illegible]rdly well-intended, bit of gossip. The letter [illegible]ddressed to his daughters, and it need scarcely [illegible]said that his gentle nature would not have allowed him to write with such vehemence but under a sense of the greatest injustice:—

That man who for years has persecuted me with claims of the

most fantastic kind died on Friday last. It seems he was utterly broken down by drink. But a new persecution has replaced the old one. Since Saturday his two sons have besieged me with applications the most violent for pecuniary aid in burying him. Their pride is dismally disturbed at the thought of his having a pauper's funeral. But, of course, I have refused to interfere. After being often dismissed, and for perhaps a dozen times reinstated at the earnest intercession of influential people, who could not resist the misery manifested by his ruined wife, he offended more than ever, and finally was solemnly discharged for ever. There went to wreck seventy guineas a year, on which, with *their* small family and his wife's economy, they might have lived in comfort. But not content with sacrificing *that*, he would not suffer his wife to obtain a livelihood by letting lodgings, such were the uproars that he kicked up every night. I suppose that a more absolute wreck of decent prosperity never can have been exemplified. Driven mad by ill-usage and something very like starvation, for all the furniture and clothes gradually disappeared at the pawnbroker's, she also took to drinking by fits and starts. Luckily she could not often obtain drink. But at times she *did* obtain it, and drank to excess. In one of those excesses it was that she fell backwards on the area steps of a house in George Square, and five or six days after (having been found by the police with her skull fractured) died in the infirmary, not recognising, I believe, anybody whatever up to the moment of her death.

Owing to various circumstances—loss of teeth, resulting from that early neuralgic affection, and weakness, most probably ulceration, of the stomach, due to his sufferings in London, which often caused him inexpressible agony—it is literally true that he ne[illegible] not to say enjoyed, a dinner. It is [illegible] who have never suffered to criticise and [illegible] this weakness and that weakness, as indicat[illegible] indulgence in opium; but the truth is, that [illegible] an opium-*eater* in a more essential sense tha[illegible] conveyed by any passing and superficial use of the now common phrase. And we say this although

we have fully in our view his own deliverances on the evil that *excessive* opium-eating wrought on him at various periods in inducing strange forms of nervous suffering. But how many who would condemn him with unqualified phrase are but pharisaic throwers of the first stone—themselves often injured by wine, by spirits, or by over-eating? Opium was De Quincey's mainstay—the only food that his delicate system not unfrequently could receive. And while he frankly confesses the evils that excesses in it had wrought upon him, he deliberately records his conviction, in the later years of his life, that but for it he would have been in his grave thirty years before. As to opium in itself, and taken in due limit, he will acknowledge nothing save benefit; but he regards himself as deeply wronged when it is suggested as possible that his "Confessions" had had an alien influence in leading young men to become opium-eaters. When this charge was on one occasion deliberately made, he thus met and disposed of it:—

Whatever were the impelling principles to the publication of the opium "Confessions," whether motive that was distinctly contemplated or impulse that was obscurely felt, there will remain a perfectly separate question as to the practical result. For a conscientious man will grieve over those consequences from his acts w[illegible]ch he ne[illegible]er could have designed, and will charge upon himsel[illegible]se seductions which he had not even suspected.

Here, then, o[illegible]as an admirable occasion for the extent of my power b[illegible]laying bare the world of mischief which I have caused; and, se[illegible]dly, the fairest excuse possible for resuming my enchant[illegible]wand in order that I may exorcise the evil spirits which I have evoked. Listening to others, as Coleridge for instance, I ought first to be horror-struck at the havoc which my revelations have produced; and next, under the coercion of conscience, I ought to find the necessity for redressing this havoc by revela-

tions still more appalling. There in 1822 is your bane; here in 1845 is your antidote. Oh, stratagems of vanity! but I reject both. I have neither done the evil in past times with which I am charged, nor am I at present seeking to repair it. The first is not a fact; the second is not a possibility.

I remember at this moment with laughter the case of a man on a sick-bed, who was deploring to his confessor the awful mischief likely to affect his own and future generations from an infidel book that he had published. But the kind-hearted father entreated him to take comfort, upon the ground that, except for a stray trunkmaker or so, and a few vagabond pastrycooks, no man, to his own certain knowledge, had ever bought a copy. Whereupon the sinner leaped out of bed, and being a member of the "*fancy*," he proceeded to floor the confessor, as a proper reward for his insulting consolations.

For my own part, I cannot in a literal sense appropriate the benefit of the good father's suggestion. It is past all denying that in 1822 very many people (trunkmakers not included) did procure copies, and cause copies to be multiplied, of the opium "Confessions." But I have yet to learn that any one of these people was inoculated by me, or could have been, with a first love for a drug so notorious as opium. Teach opium-eating! Did I teach wine-drinking? Did I reveal the mystery of sleeping? Did I inaugurate the infirmity of laughter?

Yet still I may have sharpened the attention, or I may have pointed a deeper interest, to this perilous medicine. But these cases are accidents perhaps in a world where comparatively so few can be left to their own free choice in matters of daily habit—are such slight undulations upon the face of society as we see arising on the sea from the passing of a steamboat; they subside almost immediately into the mighty levels around them. In any ten cases of this nature, five will probably cure themselves by original defect of natural preconformity to the drug—four by coercion of circumstances barring all means of procuring opium. The opium-eater goes to sea, to jail, to the hulks, to a hospital, or he is ordered off on a march; and in any of these cases the chain is broken violently. But then for the one case remaining? As to *that*, there is reason to think, from the vast diffusion of opium in all its forms, that any individual temptation must have been the *causa occasionalis* only, and not the *causa sine qua non* of such a habit. A man has read a description of

the powers lodged in opium; or, which is still more striking, he has found these powers heraldically emblazoned in some magnificent dream due to that agency. This by accident has been his own introduction to opium-eating. But if he never *had* seen the gorgeous description or the gorgeous dream, he would (fifty to one) have tried opium on the recommendation of a friend for toothache, which is as general as the air, or for ear-ache, or (as Coleridge) for rheumatism; and thus, without either description or dream, he would have learned the powers of opium on the surer basis of his own absolute experience.

Consequently, I deny the opening to any large range of mischief; and not believing in any mischief caused by my "Confessions," equally I deny the opening to any compensating power of detaining men from opium. My faith is, that no man is likely to adopt opium or to lay it aside in consequence of anything he may read in a book. A book may suggest it; but, in default of the book, every day's intercourse with men, and every day's experience of pain, would have made the same suggestion.

Taking this in connection with his deliberate statement in the final form of the "Confessions," published in 1856, we can only conclude that, on maturer deliberation, and yet fuller experience, he modified the view we have referred to so far as to return to his earlier idea that a moderate indulgence in his case was necessary even to sustain life. His whole case suggests, indeed, that he suffered from chronic gastralgia—attested, as it seems to be, by the gnawing pains in the stomach, his incapacity for solid food, even in very small quantity, and his nervous horror, which only opium could relieve.* This view seems to gain support from his own statement in that letter to Miss Mitford, where he thus meets the suggestion that his nervous sufferings might be

* See Appendix,—"Medical View of De Quincey's Case."

some horrible recoil from the long habit of using opium to excess:—

"This seems improbable," he says, "for more reasons than one; because previously to any *considerable* abuse of opium—viz., in the year 1812—I had suffered an unaccountable attack of nervous horror, which lasted for five months, and went off in one night, as unaccountably as it had first come on, in one second of time. I was at the time perfectly well; was at my cottage in Grasmere, and had just accompanied Mr. Grosvenor Bedford, an old friend of Southey's, round the Lake district."

CHAPTER XX.

CRITICISMS AND CHARACTERISTICS—continued.

WE have followed some of De Quincey's more marked personal characteristics, it now becomes our business to deal with some features more special to his writings. First of all, we remark on the compass of his vocabulary. Language is his pliant servant. It is true that in some of his writings he might seem to an unsympathetic and insensitive reader to be merely exercising a faculty of bringing out new verbal combinations. But in these instances it will be found, on more careful analysis, that his style corresponds to the subject, and that there is no divorce between them. It is, indeed, the subtle and insinuating harmony—the sense of his having given adequate utterance to whole regions of sentiment and feeling that had heretofore lain in a neglected "debateable land" between prose and poetry, that constitutes his claim to be reckoned as the first writer of "impassioned English prose," in which a careful balance of correspondent structure was thus faithfully maintained. He had passed through peculiar and

wholly abnormal experiences—did he or did he not adopt the most effective form by which not only to convey a coherent *idea* of these experiences, but to awaken in the reader something correspondent to the rhythmic movement of feeling and phantasy in himself in these more elevated and dream-stirred moments of his life? In dealing with "Reminiscences" of childhood in his autobiographic sketches, did he present to the mirror of memory an image sufficiently clear to recall to the mind of the ordinary reader a sense of something distant, sweet, vague, and innocent—"more deeply interfused than is the light of setting suns"? The fact of the wide interest which "The Opium Confessions" and the "Sketches of Infancy" have awakened, and the place they have maintained as genuine and permanent additions to our literature, amply suffice to attest this.

"In that succession of dreams," says Mr. Bayne, "which seems to me to constitute De Quincey's masterpiece, there is, over all the splendour and terror, a clear serenity of light which belongs to the very highest style of poetic beauty. The conceptions are very daring, but each form of spurious originality is absent—the fantastic and the grotesque; there is the mystery of the land of dreams, yet so powerful is the imagination which strikes the whole into being, that the wondrous picture has the vividness and truth of reality; while, with every change of scene and emotion, the language changes too—now rich, glowing, and bold, when the idea is free, sunny joyousness—now melting into a gentle, spiritual melody of more than Æolian softness—and now rising to a harmonic swell that echoes the everlast-

ing gallop of the steeds which drag the triumphal car." ✕

But if De Quincey is to be ranked as the chief master of impassioned prose, not the less may it be claimed for him that he has produced specimens of as clear, simple, idiomatic English as is to be found in the literature of our century. A gentleman of our acquaintance, indeed, was wont to maintain that, in one respect, it was a pity that De Quincey's merits in other directions had been so completely overshadowed by those of his first great work—that, in point of fact, the "Confessions of an Opium-Eater" *taken by itself* gives a wholly erroneous view of De Quincey's powers as a master of style. Were we asked for a specimen of graceful vigorous English which might be set before a student as a standard up to which he should make it his business to work, we should have no hesitation in pointing to the essays on Shakespeare, and Casuistry, and certain sections of the "Political Economy," as pre-eminently suited for this purpose.

A good authority seemed to think very differently from the writer we have already dealt with of De Quincey's style as applied to Political Economy. Mr. M'Culloch, in his "Literature of Political Economy," says of the "Templar's Dialogues:"—"They are unequalled, perhaps, for brevity, pungency, and force. They not only bring the Ricardian theory of value into strong relief, but triumphantly repel, or rather annihilate, the objections urged against it by Malthus in his pamphlet, 'The Measure of Value Stated and Illustrated,' and in his Political Economy, and

by Say and others. They may be said, indeed, to have exhausted the subject." *

In opposition, indeed, to the idea that De Quincey is "pompous" and "over-coloured" in style, we regard him as having erred in some slight degree in many parts of his essays by want of dignity, and the excessive use of colloquialisms and even of slang-phrases. In not a few cases these are undoubtedly used with great tact, force, and point. The new applications which he gives to old phrases indeed forms one of the delights of the student. Not to encumber our page with separate references, it will perhaps suffice that we mention the article on Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," to which certainly no critic could raise the objection that has been raised to the style of other works of his—as "pompous" or "over-coloured." It lies wholly beyond our scope here to enter on a minute and technical analysis of his style, which, besides, would be so far a work of supererogation, since the reader who wishes a good guide in that line will find it ready to his hand in Mr. Minto's admirable and conscientious Handbook. †

Passing from merely technical considerations of style, the student should note the variety and the range of his topics, and the complete ease and

* In this it would seem that the heads of the Government colleges in India agree with us with respect to the "Political Economy," for they made a condensation of the work, and published it at Allahabad, to serve as a text-book for their classes in this science.

† Manual of English Prose Literature. By William Minto, M.A. William Blackwood & Sons.

thoroughness with which they are invariably treated. The most recondite inquiries, as well as the most dramatic and affecting incidents in common life; biographies at once simple and profound in analysis; dreams; logical systems rigid and exact applied to practical affairs; the most incisive criticisms, ranging from discourses on the dramatic poets of Greece to reviews of the latest compilations of anecdotes; humorous *jeux d'esprit* disguised as real narratives; sketches of manners and circumstantial fictions that look as though they were *most* historical;—all attest a marvellous faculty of memory, of analysis, of combination, of playful and creative humour. In every scrap that comes from his hand we see the mixing and toning of many influences, to impart that final and unaffected felicity which belongs to a few only of the writers of any age—to Irving or Hawthorne among Americans, to Herder or Goethe or Heine among Germans, to Sainte Beuve or Girardin among French writers, to such as Thackeray or Matthew Arnold among ourselves. We cannot find the space to describe the circle of illustrative quotation we should have liked—one or two salient and contrasted specimens must suffice. Here is a little picture from Kate, the Spanish military-naval nun, a production which, while giving much information as to Spain and her relations at the date it bears, abounds in quaint and humorous passages, subdued by unexpected tender touches, and all wrought to one ingenious climax of exaggerated tragi-comedy:—

"Kate's prudence whispered eternally, that safety there was none for her, until she had laid the Atlantic between herself and St. Sebastian's. Life

was to be for *her* a Bay of Biscay; and it was odds, but she had first embarked upon this billowy life from the literal Bay of Biscay. Chance ordered otherwise. Or, as a Frenchman says, with eloquent ingenuity, in connection with this very story, 'Chance is but the *pseudonyme* of God for those particular cases which He does not choose to subscribe openly with His own sign-manual.' She crept upstairs to her bedroom. Simple are the travelling preparations of those that, possessing nothing, have no imperials to pack. She had Juvenal's qualification for carolling gaily through a forest full of robbers; for she had nothing to lose but a change of linen, that rode easily enough under the left arm, leaving the right free for answering the questions of impertinent customers. As she crept downstairs, she heard the crocodile still weeping forth his sorrows to the pensive ear of twilight, and to the sympathetic Don Francisco. Ah, what a beautiful idea occurs to me at this point! Once on the hustings at Liverpool, I saw a mob orator, whose howling mouth, open to its widest expansion, suddenly some larking sailor, by the most dexterous of shots, plugged up with a paving-stone. Here now, at Valladolid, was another mouth that equally required plugging. What a pity, then, that some gay brother page of Kate's had not been there to turn aside into the room, armed with a roasted potato, and, taking a sportsman's aim, to have lodged it in the crocodile's abominable mouth! Yet, what an anachronism! There were no roasted potatoes in Spain at that date (1608), which can be apodeiktically proved, because in Spain there were no

potatoes at all; and very few in England. But anger drives a man to say anything."

In contrast with this over-bubbling facetious humour, which bursts out on you at the most unexpected points, and which, so to say, turns upon itself, let us now set down this exquisitely simple summing-up of the genius of Goldsmith, and the alleviations in his lot brought by simple health and genial good-nature and hopefulness of disposition:—

"My trust is, that Goldsmith lived on the whole a life which, though troubled, was one of average enjoyment. Unquestionably, when reading at midnight, in the middle watch of a century which *he* never reached by one whole generation, this record of one so guileless, so upright, or seeming to be otherwise only in the eyes of those who did not know his difficulties, nor could have understood them; when recurring also to his admirable genius, to the sweet natural gaiety of his oftentimes pathetic humour, and to the varied accomplishments, from talent or erudition, by which he gave effect to endowments so fascinating,—one cannot but sorrow over the strife which he sustained, and over the wrong which he suffered. A few natural tears fall from every eye at the rehearsal of so much contumely from fools, which he faced unresistingly, as one bareheaded in a hail-storm;* and worse to bear than the scorn of fools, was the imperfect sympathy and jealous self-distrust-

* "I do not allude chiefly to his experience of childhood, when he is reported to have been a general butt of ridicule for his ugliness and his supposed stupidity; since, as regarded the latter reproach, he could not have suffered very long, having already

ing esteem which to the last he received from his friends. Doubtless he suffered much wrong; but so, in one way or other, do most men: he suffered also this special wrong, that in his lifetime he never was fully appreciated by any one friend—something of a counter-movement ever mingled with praise for *him;* he never saw himself enthroned in the heart of any young and fervent admirer; and he was always overshadowed by men less deeply genial, though more showy, than himself; but these things happen, and will happen for ever, to myriads amongst the benefactors of earth. Their names ascend in songs of thankful commemoration, yet seldom until the ears are deaf that would have thrilled to the music. And these were the heaviest of Goldsmith's afflictions: what are likely to be thought such—viz., the battles which he fought for his daily bread—I do not number amongst them. To struggle is not to suffer. Heaven grants to few of us a life of untroubled prosperity, and grants it least of all to its favourites. . . . If, therefore, Goldsmith's life *had* been one of continual struggle, it would not follow that it had therefore sunk below the standard of ordinary happiness. But the life-struggle of Goldsmith, though severe enough (after all allowances) to challenge a feeling of tender compassion, was not in such a degree severe as has been represented. He enjoyed two great immunities from suffering that have been much overlooked; and

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at a childish age vindicated his intellectual place by the verses which opened to him an academic destination. I allude to his mature life, and the supercilious condescension with which even his reputed friends doled out their praises to him."

such immunities that, in our opinion, four in five of all the people ever connected with Goldsmith's works, as publishers, printers, compositors (that is, men taken at random), have very probably suffered more, upon the whole, than he. The immunities were these: 1st, from any *bodily* taint of low spirits. He had a constitutional gaiety of heart; an elastic hilarity; and, as he himself expresses it, a 'knack of hoping'—which knack could not be bought with Ormus and with Ind, nor hired for a day with the peacock throne of Delhi. How easy was it to bear the brutal affront of being to his face described as '*Doctor Minor*,' when one hour or less would dismiss the '*Doctor Major*,' so invidiously contradistinguished from himself, to a struggle with scrofulous melancholy; whilst *he*, if returning to solitude and a garret, was returning also to natural cheerfulness. *There* lay one immunity, beyond all price, from a mode of strife, to which others, by a large majority, are doomed—strife with bodily wretchedness. Another immunity he had of almost equal value, and yet almost equally forgotten by his biographers—viz., the responsibilities of a family. Wife and children he had not. They it is that, being a man's chief blessings, create also for him the deadliest of his anxieties, that stuff his pillow with thorns, that surround his daily path with snares. Suppose the case of a man who has helpless dependants of this class upon himself, summoned to face some sudden failure of his resources; how shattering to the power of exertion, and, above all, of exertion by an organ so delicate as the creative intellect, dealing with subjects so coy as those of imaginative

sensibility, to know that instant ruin attends his failure. . . .

"All the motions of Goldsmith's nature moved in the direction of the true, the natural, the sweet, the gentle. In the quiet times, politically speaking, through which his course of life travelled, he found a musical echo to the tenor of his own original sensibilities. In the architecture of European history, as it unfolded its proportions along the line of his own particular experience, there was a symmetry with the proportions of his own unpretending mind. Our revolutionary age would have unsettled his brain. The colossal movements of nations, from within and from without; the sorrow of the times, which searches so deeply; the grandeur of the times, which aspires so loftily;—these forces, acting for the last fifty years by secret sympathy upon all fountains of thinking and impassioned speculation, have raised them from depths never visited by our fathers, into altitudes too dizzy for *their* contemplating. This generation and the last, with their dreadful records, would have untuned Goldsmith for writing in the key that suited him; and us they would have untuned for understanding his music, had we not learned to understand it in childhood, before the muttering hurricanes in the upper air had begun to reach our young ears, and forced them away to the thundering overhead, from the carollings of birds amongst rustling bowers."

The concluding words of the essay on Shelley might be cited as a contrasted specimen in the biographical department:—

"When one thinks of the early misery which he suffered, and of the insolent infidelity which, being

yet so young, he wooed with a lover's passion, then the darkness of midnight begins to form a deep impenetrable background, upon which the phantasmagoria of all that is to come may arrange itself in troubled phosphoric streams and sweeping processions of woe. Yet again, when one recurs to his gracious nature, his fearlessness, his truth, his purity from all fleshliness of appetite, his freedom from vanity, his diffusive love and tenderness,—suddenly out of the darkness reveals itself a morning of May, forests and thickets of rose advance to the foreground, and from the midst of them looks out 'the eternal child,' cleansed from his sorrow, radiant with joy, having power given him to forget the misery which he suffered, power given him to forget the misery which he caused, and leaning with his heart upon that dove-like faith against which his erring intellect had rebelled."

No careful reader of De Quincey could suppose that he would have much sympathy with the formal dreamer and theological seer, Swedenborg. His criticism of the man and his system is not exhaustive, but is so incisive and suggestive, as far as it goes, and withal so little known, that we give it a place here, as indicating variety of interest and of style:—

"Of all writers, Swedenborg is the only one I ever heard of who has contrived to strip even the shadowy world beyond the grave of all its mystery and all its awe. From the very heaven of heavens he has rent away the veil: no need for 'seraphs to tremble while they gaze;' for the familiarity with which all objects are invested, makes it impossible

that even poor mortals should find any reason to tremble. Until I had seen his books, I had not conceived it possible to carry an atmosphere so earthy, and steaming with the vapours of earth, into regions which, by early connection in our infant thoughts with the sanctities of death, have a hold upon the reverential affections such as they rarely lose. In this view, I should conceive that Swedenborg, if it were at all possible for him to become a popular author, would at the same time become immensely mischievous. He would de-religionise men beyond all authors whatsoever. . . . Swedenborg, in some senses, was certainly not charitable. He had been scandalised by a notion which, it seems, he found prevalent among the poor of the Continent—viz., if riches were a drag and a negative force on the road to religious perfection, poverty must be a positive title *per se* to the favour of Heaven. Grievously offended with this error, he came almost to hate poverty as a presumptive indication of this offensive heresy; scarcely would he allow it an indirect value, as removing in many cases the occasions or incitements to evil. No; being in itself neutral and indifferent, he argued that it had become erroneously a ground of presumptuous hope; whilst the rich man, aware of his danger, was in some degree armed against it by fear and humility. And, in this course of arguing and of corresponding feeling, Swedenborg had come to hate the very name of a poor candidate for heaven, as bitterly as a sharking attorney hates the applications of a pauper client."

De Quincey's inveterate propensity to digression, and to a kind of guerilla defence of his text by

footnotes, has already been referred to in these pages. This tendency proceeded alike from his excessive acuteness of memory for facts, and his rare power of seizing and exhibiting the secondary and less obvious relations of things, no less than from an extreme conscientiousness that did not allow him to leave statements so unqualified as orators and more popular writers have found it to be their interest to leave them. It is confessedly a drawback in view of immediate popular effect, however beautiful may be the traits of character it establishes. But these notes abundantly show the man of immense resource, who does not need coldly to reckon the value of what he thus throws away—what with but very slight labour might not seldom have been made to stand for a separate and valuable essay. The following note on the picturesque is simply an ordinary footnote, as De Quincey esteems it:—

"The idea of the picturesque is one which did not exist at all until the post-Christian ages; neither amongst the Grecians nor amongst the Romans; and therefore, as respects one reason, it was that the art of landscape-painting did not exist (except in a Chinese infancy and as a mere trick of inventive ingenuity) among the finest artists of Greece. What is the picturesque, as placed in relation to the beautiful and the sublime? It is (to define it by the very shortest form of words) the characteristic pushed into a sensible excess. The prevailing character of any natural object, no matter how little attractive it may be for beauty, is always interesting for itself, *as* the character and hieroglyphic symbol

of the purposes pursued by nature in the determination of its form, style of motion, texture of superficies, relation of parts, &c.

"Thus, for example, an expression of dulness and somnolent torpor does not ally itself with grace or elegance; but, in combination with strength and other qualities, it may compose a character of serviceable and patient endurance, as in the cart-horse, having unity in itself, and tending to one class of uses sufficient to mark it out by circumscription for a distinct and separate contemplation. Now, in combination with certain counteracting circumstances, as with the momentary energy of some great effort, much of this peculiar character might be lost, or defeated, or dissipated. On that account the skilful observer will seek out circumstances that are in harmony with the principal tendencies, and assist them; such, suppose, as a state of lazy relaxation from labour, and the fall of heavy drenching rain causing the head to droop, and the shaggy mane, together with the fetlocks, to weep. These, and other circumstances of attitude, &c., bring out the character or prevailing tendency of the animal in some excess; and, in such a case, we call the resulting effect to the eye, picturesque—or, in fact, *characteresque*. In extending this speculation to objects of art and human purposes, there is something more required of subtle investigation. Meantime it is evident that neither the sublime nor the beautiful depends upon any *secondary* interest of a purpose, or of a character expressing that purpose. They (confining the case to visual objects) court the *primary* interest involved in that (form, colour, tex-

ture, altitude, motion) which forces admiration, which fascinates the eye, for itself, and without a question of any distinct purpose; and instead of character—that is, discriminating and separating expression, tending to the special and the individual—they both agree in pursuing the Catholic, the Normal, the Ideal."

But amid all this digression, and guerilla defence by footnotes, it is most interesting to watch with what deftness he worms his way through all the distracting reminiscences, right to the point which he had in his eye at starting. A sense of ingenious simplicity, of unconscious masterliness, rises upon the reader: what had at first tantalised him becomes a source of endless attraction and interest. Curiosity in his course and the movements possible to him is stimulated the more that we read, precisely as in watching the half-aerial gyrations of some thoroughly-finished dancer. An acute critic, whom we have still amongst us, has very effectively seized this point in the following passage:—

"The goal indeed is always kept in view; however circuitous the wandering may be, there is always a return to the subject; the river's course is always seawards: but there are no fixed embankments, between which, in straight, purpose-like course, the stream is compelled to flow: you are led aside in the most wayward manner, and though you must allow that every individual bay and wooded creek is in itself beautiful, yet, being a Briton, accustomed to feed on facts, like the alligators, whom the old naturalists asserted to live on stones, and thinking it right to walk to the purpose of a book with that firm step and by that nearest road which conduct you to

your office, you are soon ready to exclaim that this is trifling, and that you wish the author would speak to the point. But there is some witchery which still detains you, the trifling seems to be flavoured with some indefinable essence, which spreads an irresistible charm around: you recollect that nature has innumerable freaks. . . . Then your trust becomes deeper, your earnestness of study redoubles, you are profoundly convinced that here is no pretence, no unnatural effort; your murmuring turns to astonishment at the complexity, richness, and strangely-blended variety of nature's effects. If your experience is the same as ours most honestly was, you will proceed from a certain pleasurable titillation to the conviction that, however hampered, however open to objection, here is an intellect, in all the great faculties of analysis, combination, and reception, of a power and range which you are at a loss to measure or define. We must take into account, in judging of the powers of De Quincey, the fact that his life has been shadowed by one great cloud, which would have fatally obscured any ordinary intellect; that he has seen the stars through a veil, and that we have to mete the power of that vision which could pierce such an obstruction. It must be remembered, too, that the mind of Mr. de Quincey is, on all hands, admitted to be one of a very singular and original kind. It is pre-eminently characterised by two qualities, which are partially regarded with suspicion by hard thinkers, and tend to lower the expectation of the reader who is in search of substantial intellectual sustenance: we mean humour and what we can only call mysticism. De Quin-

is essentially and always a humourist, a humourist of a very rare and delicate order, but whose very delicacy is mistaken by hard minds for feebleness."

The "North American Review," in noticing one of the earlier volumes of "The Collected Works," thus ingeniously followed up the same line of remark:—

"We are struck at once by the exquisite refinement of mind, the subtleness of association, and the extreme tenuity of the threads of thought, the gossamer filaments yet finally weaving themselves together, and thickening imperceptibly into a strong and expanded web. Mingled with this, and perhaps springing from a similar mental habit, is an occasional dreaminess both in speculation and in narrative, when the mind seems to move vaguely round in vast returning circles. The thoughts catch hold of nothing, but are heaved and tossed like masses of cloud by the wind. An incident of trivial import is turned and turned to catch the light of every possible consequence, and so magnified as to become portentous and terrible." And after having made special reference to the evidences of multifarious reading in the essay entitled "Dinner, Real and Reputed," the reviewer proceeds:—"A barren and trivial fact, under the power of that life-giving hand, shoots out on all sides into waving branches and green leaves, and odoriferous flowers. It is not the fact that interests us, but the mind working upon it, investing it with mock-heroic dignity, or rendering it illustrative of really serious principles; or, with the true insight of genius, discovering, in that

which a vulgar eye would despise, the germs of grandeur and beauty; the passions of war in the contests of the rival factions of schoolboys, the tragedy in every peasant's death-bed. . . . . To our fancy, the refuse of his *escritoire* must be, like the sweepings of a goldsmith's shop, worthy of the most careful sifting. De Quincey constantly amazes us by the amount and diversity of his learning. Two or three of the minor papers in the collected volumes are absolutely loaded with the life spoils of their author's scholarship, yet carry their burden as lightly as our bodies sustain the weight of the circumambient atmosphere. So perfect is his tact in finding, or rather making, a place for everything that, while inviting, he eludes the charge of pedantry. . . . .

"It is scarcely to be expected, however, that one who tries his hand at so many kinds of pencraft should always excel; yet such is the force of De Quincey's intellect, the brilliancy of his imagination, and the charm of his style, that he throws a new and peculiar interest over every subject which he discusses, while his fictitious narratives in general rivet the attention of the reader with a power not easily resisted. In this volume now before us, the first and longest paper presents a very ingenious and elaborate discussion of some of the fundamental principles of political economy, with special reference to the meaning to be attached to the term 'value,' but also touching the subjects of rent, wages, and profits."

To lovers of alliteration, it might sound as somewhat of a warning, if we mentioned that De Quincey, in spite of his wide vocabulary and his aptitude for

phrase, had a horror of excessively alliterative sentences. In going over his MSS. and proofs, we have come on many instances of this. Sometimes he would write, say, "inextricably interblended," or "inextricably interlinked," but the first word is deleted. *

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LAST DAYS.

IT cannot be said that the end came to De Quincey quite unexpectedly; though he himself was reluctant to admit that it was so near. He had outlived the allotted threescore and ten; had seen many men, his fellow-workers, of far more robust physical build than himself, fail and pass away; but he cherished his plans and prospects with a kind of childlike faith, and was, in his own way, industrious and hopeful almost to the last. Tokens of weakness had, however, been unmistakeably proclaiming themselves for the last two years. The slightest extra effort tried him, and left him exhausted. An hour's search after a page of *copy* gone astray amongst his multifarious strata of printed matter, or the struggle to recover a reference, would prostrate him for days; laudanum, which he was now compelled to resort to more than for years he had done, on account of increasing nervous pains, lost its effect, and his sleep was broken and fitful. Little "worries," which before had been set aside by effort of will, took possession of his mind, and distracted

him in the midst of his labours. But he was so gentle, so hopeful, so possessed by the fear of giving unnecessary trouble or concern to others, that he would not for weeks listen to the suggestion of the friend who was now most often with him, in his rooms in Edinburgh, that a physician should be called in, or that his daughter should be sent for. At length new symptoms made themselves manifest, and he consented that his daughter should be brought to him, and that Dr. Warburton Begbie should pay him a visit. This physician, who passed away in March 1876, and who was as noted for high culture and chivalric devotion as for his professional skill, was unwearying in his attentions, and was so deeply interested in his patient, that he not only brought his distinguished father and one other eminent physician to consult about the case, but carefully set down for the benefit of relatives and friends his impressions in an account of those last days. This writing has never before had a more extended use; and as it has been put into our hands, and as we ourselves had benefited by Dr. Begbie's great skill and goodness, we have a peculiar, if a mournful, pleasure in here introducing it:—

"My first visit to Mr. de Quincey," he writes, "was on the afternoon of Saturday, the 22d October 1859. I had never seen Mr. de Quincey before that day, though cherishing from boyhood the highest admiration for him. I found him in the parlour, sitting on a sofa, but resting his head on a cushion placed on a chair before him; this posture was assumed not from pain, but by reason of feebleness. He received me with all that graciousness and winning kindness of manner and of speech for which he was remarkable, and briefly ex-

plained the nature of his indisposition. After my examination, which succeeded the description Mr. de Quincey had given me of his case, he expressed the most ready acquiescence in the employment of the remedial means judged to be necessary. I found Mr. de Quincey then, as for many days thereafter, able and ready to speak on all subjects with that clearness of intellect and perception which were so remarkably his; indicating no failure, as far as I could judge, of the mental faculties.

"The following day, Sunday (October 23d), Mr. de Quincey was better; the degree of feverishness which existed the previous day had passed; he had spent a better night, slept more, and had awoke with a greater degree of refreshment. With a kindness and consideration which deeply impressed me, he acknowledged the beneficial operation of the remedies that had been suggested; and enlarged, in a manner altogether new to me, upon the peculiar effects they had produced. These, though in no way remarkable in themselves, could only be appreciated by one who had learned, as he had, to notice the consequences—sensational as well as active—of all agencies. Very vividly then, as afterwards on many occasions, were some of the descriptions in the 'Confessions' brought to my remembrance. On this occasion, as on many subsequent visits, Mr. de Quincey alluded to the habit, in which he had so long indulged, of taking opium. With that noble honesty and candour for which, no less than for intellectual endowments and highest mental cultivation, he was distinguished, and with a child-like simplicity and most captivating kindness, he expressed the feeling—amounting to a deep-

seated conviction of what was imperatively demanded—that the physician should be informed, with the most scrupulous fidelity, as to all the habits of his patient. I then learned, as I had been led to believe, that for a long period Mr. de Quincey's indulgence in opium was extremely limited; though the total abandonment of its use he had found to be (and with this conclusion, in a case of confirmed habit, medical men will not be disposed to differ) inconsistent with the enjoyment of that bodily health, but more particularly that state of mental calmness and tranquillity, the possession of which he desiderated above all things. He readily acknowledged the perniciousness of habitual indulgence in opium; though he was equally ready to claim for the potent drug effects eminently beneficial. '*Quare facit opium dormire?*' is a question put by Molière; but the sleepy, brain-intoxicating quality of opium De Quincey prized not. How much the substantial power and brilliant fancy of his writings had to do with the opium-eating, I do not inquire; but that it helped to keep active and entire, during so many long years of bodily feebleness, that large and constant-working brain—that, in a word, it fed it—I have no manner of doubt. And further, that the almost singular immunity Mr. de Quincey enjoyed from headache, which, in the course of his long life, he never knew—a common source of annoyance, oftentimes of misery, to ordinary-living students—was likely enough due to the opium, I also believe.

"For several days after the visits referred to, Mr. de Quincey's state of health, though causing anxiety, was not such as to excite alarm. Two or three times, during the course of as many weeks, there recurred slight and

transient febrile attacks, such as are incidental to persons who have passed the allotted span of human existence, accompanied by a renewal of his catarrhal complaint. But these passed, leaving him, perhaps, a little weaker after each; though always manifesting—and this was, I believe, noticed as a characteristic feature in all the ailments Mr. de Quincey suffered from—a decided and ready power of rallying. Encouraged to visit him very frequently, I availed myself of so great a privilege; and for many days spent a short time in the morning, and again at a later hour, with him. On the former visits, whether seated in his chair or lying in bed, I generally found him attempting to read without spectacles, which he never employed. Almost up to the last moment, he looked anxiously for the morning papers, and listened with great interest to what was read to him from them, if he was not able to read himself. The knowledge Mr. de Quincey possessed of the most recent events, political and of general interest, was most amazing, and could only have been acquired by diligent perusal of the periodical press. He had, however, no relish for municipal matters; still less for sectional ecclesiastical affairs. When tired of reading, he was read to by the daughter whose presence cheered his last days, or by a faithful attendant, for whose comfort, as was invariably his character, he manifested the utmost solicitude, bearing many little annoyances that increased trouble might not be incurred. In his correspondence, long after he had ceased to reply to letters—that was forbidden, indeed, during his whole illness—he took the greatest interest. It would be gratifying to many who wrote to him in his last days to know how much he valued their

letters, as well as the little acts—especially the reciprocal attentions of authors—of kindness which so many paid him. Day after day books were handed in; these, when unable to read, he nevertheless carefully examined. Thus I saw him treat Mr. Allibone's recent Herculean task, his 'Dictionary of English Literature.' The kind mention in that work of himself, upon which I remarked, led him to speak of what he styled 'the more than deserved consideration paid him in America, particularly in Boston.'

"During those days of dull November which, with all its gloominess and more than ordinary fog, did not in the least affect the serenity and tranquil composure of his spirit, devoutly reverential and adoring—as the amplest testimony, were that required, could be made by the writer of these lines—and animated by the most enlarged benevolence towards mankind, especially towards children, Mr. de Quincey was evidently becoming feebler. He was generally unwilling to think so himself, but at times referred with perfect composure to the probably not distant approach of the last enemy. Summoned on one occasion hurriedly by night to his bedside, owing to a tendency to swoon, which then for the first time during his illness had alarmed his daughter and attendant, I arrived to find him better, and to receive from his lips those warm and courteous expressions of gratitude which throughout life I shall hold in remembrance, coupled with an apology for disturbing me at so late an hour, adding that his desire to see me had arisen from the conviction that, were the symptoms he suffered to continue or to return, death must occur. This was said calmly and most resignedly. During several nights, and

latterly by day, when he had fallen into a gentle sleep, his mind wandered. Once or twice, suddenly awakening, he seemed much startled and surprised, and for a short time there was some difficulty in reassuring him as to the identity both of persons and objects in the room. At other times, when the mind wandered, the words which were uttered sufficiently loud to be heard distinctly revealed the perfect composure within, and nothing he said afforded evidence of that *senilis stultitia quæ deliratio appellari solet.* Often he recognised the 'footsteps of angels,' and addressed words to 'the departed.' He enjoyed at such times 'a holy, calm delight,' was often speaking to children, and seemed anxious they should be especially cared for; thus at its close verifying the character he had enjoyed through life, of extreme fondness for the young.

"While for many weeks anxiety as to the result of his illness had been entertained, it was only on Sunday, the 4th December, that alarm was awakened. Suddenly Mr. de Quincey became weaker; and though on Monday he had rallied not a little, the duty of summoning an absent daughter was apparent. On Tuesday he was in his chair for a short time, and conversed with readiness, though not with the same ease as formerly. Decidedly weaker in the evening of that day, from the circumstance that he had refused all food, it was only too evident on Wednesday morning that his hours on earth were numbered. He recognised in the forenoon his eldest daughter, who arrived in time to receive the blessing of her dying father; and with the single expression of 'Thank you' to those around him, which was uttered with touching sweetness and radiant expression, he

passed into a drowsy state, by degrees became insensible, and thus on the forenoon of Thursday died, his death being ascribable rather to exhaustion of the system than to specific disease."

Miss de Quincey has kindly set down some additional details respecting those last days :—

"I had been visiting my eldest sister in Ireland, when I received a note from Mr. Hogg, saying that my father was not well, and that there were symptoms which caused some anxiety to his medical adviser. I started for Edinburgh the next day, and arrived at my father's lodgings to find him rather better, but still in bed. He never was well enough to be removed to our little cottage at Lasswade, so I took up my abode in his lodgings till his death, about a couple of months from the time I had heard that he was taken ill.

"For some time after I returned he was much better, and usually cheerful. He was attended by his landlady's sister, Miss Stark, with the most devoted kindness, and by myself. But though wonderfully sweet and gentle in all his ways, there was one difficulty that had to be contended with. His hatred of anything like rules made it difficult for him to follow any medical directions. Life that was to be floated on stated doses of beef tea, did not seem to his care-worn mind worth the struggling for; and as to any medicine which owed its effect to repeated doses at fixed times, it was set aside as a 'devil's drench,' which was not fit for a Christian to swallow. Not that he disliked medicine if he might take it in his own way, as the following circumstance, which he told to myself and sister some years before his death,

will show:—He went one day to dine with a gentleman in Edinburgh. For some reason, which I cannot remember, he was asked to stay all night. My father agreed, and was shown into a bedroom that had lately been occupied by a delicate brother of the host. This gentleman had now, however, gone abroad, leaving only a few medicine bottles nearly empty. These were all neatly arranged on the washstand. My father, left alone, began to examine them. There were 'the drops as before,' the 'teaspoonful to be taken when the cough was bad,' &c., &c. Surely, he thought to himself, it would be hard if one of these mixtures did not suit him. Surely no one would grudge him the heel taps of a lot of old medicine bottles. Having read and marked the labels, he forthwith proceeded to inwardly digest the contents of the bottles. Soon, however, his conscience began to prick him. Had he not taken a great liberty? Perhaps his host wished to try their effect upon himself, or his wife did. Perhaps they were to be kept as a tender reminiscence of the absent brother. The next morning he descended to the breakfast-table, and with grave propriety made his apologies to his host for having thus abused his hospitality. Great was his astonishment at the wonderful amiability of Mr. ——. Instead of viewing my father with a stern eye, the apologies were received with a burst of laughter, which was in a measure checked, however, by the fear of evil consequences to my father's health. But Mr. —— was reassured by hearing that something—though what the something was could not be discovered—had been decidedly beneficial.

"All during his illness my father was subject to fits of delirium, though these were seldom of a painful nature. They were chiefly connected with fancies about children, and sometimes he would wander back to the days of his own childhood. Still he was always clear enough if any question of politics or history came up, and would converse with fluency about anything in the newspaper that interested him. To the last he was able to read without the help of spectacles—one eye doing all the work, the other one being invariably closed while either writing or reading.

"About a week before he died, while sitting up in an easy chair lent him by his kind friend, Mrs. Findlay, he gave me a long account of Froude's views upon the history of Henry VIII. One night, when Miss Stark had left him, and I had taken her place, he woke up from his short sleep, and noticed Miss Stark's absence, and then went on to say, 'By the way, I wished to tell you what has displeased me much.' I saw he was anxious about something, and I went and sat down beside him to listen. He then treated me to one of those curious turns that his passing attacks of delirium would take. 'I am grieved,' he said, 'at the coarse manners that some rough fellows displayed.' I said, 'Why? What have they done?' 'Well, you know, I and the children were invited to the great supper. Do you know what supper I mean?' 'No,' I said. 'Well, I was invited to come, and to bring the children to the great supper of Jesus Christ. So, wishing the children to have suitable dresses for such an occasion, I had them all dressed in white. They

were dressed from head to foot in white. But some rough men in the streets of Edinburgh, as we passed on our way to the supper, seeing the little things in complete white, laughed and jeered at us, and made the children much ashamed.'

"We had rarely heard him mention his father's name during his life, he having died early. But one day he said, 'There is a thing I much regret, that is, that I did not know more of my dear father, for I am sure that a juster, kinder man never breathed.' He then went on to tell me many traits of his father's character which he had learned from clerks and servants, and which he had treasured up for years in his memory. At length his illness became so serious that we thought it better to telegraph to his only other daughter within reach, viz., Mrs. Craig. She came over from Ireland the day before his death. Great was his pleasure at seeing her, though, for some time, we fancied that he did not know her. Such was his constant thought of children, that he viewed her simply as connected with his grandchildren. 'How is mama?' he said when he saw her; nor did he address her as anything else but mama again. Towards the evening his weakness became extreme, and he said to my sister, 'Mama, I cannot bear the weight of clothes upon my feet.' My sister at once pulled off the heavy blankets, and wrapped a light shawl round his feet. 'Is that better?' she asked. 'Yes, my love, much better; I am better in every way—I feel much better. You know these are the feet that Jesus washed.' As the night wore on, our kind friend Dr. Warburton Begbie came and sat with us, as my

father's life slowly ebbed away. Twice only was the heavy breathing interrupted by words. He had for hours ceased to recognise any of us, but we heard him murmur, though quite distinctly, 'My dear, dear mother. Then I was greatly mistaken.' Then as the waves of death rolled faster and faster over him, suddenly out of the abyss we saw him throw up his arms, which to the last retained their strength, and say distinctly, and as if in great surprise, 'Sister! sister! sister!' The loud breathing became slower and slower, and as the world of Edinburgh awoke to busy work and life, all that was mortal of my father fell asleep for ever.

"Curiously enough, just as he breathed his last, the morning letters arrived, and amongst them one from an old schoolfellow, the Rev. Edward Grinfield. They had not met for more than fifty years, but this [redacted]leman, himself suffering from a mortal disease, wished to exchange a few words with before they should both pass out of They had not heard of one another for [redacted]d he hardly knew my father's whereabouts, less how ill he had been."

The following is the letter, touching in its tone, touching in its circumstances:—

BRIGHTON, *December* 7, 1855.

MY DEAR DE QUINCEY,—Before I quit the world, I should [redacted]rdently desire to see your handwriting. In early life, that is [redacted]lore than sixty years ago, we were schoolfellows, and mutually [redacted]ttached; nay, I can remember a boyish paper ("The Observer") on which we were engaged. Yours has been a brilliant literary career—mine far from brilliant, but, I hope, not unsuccessful as a theological student. It seems a pity that we should

not once more recognise each other before we quit the stage. I have often read your works, and never without remembering the promise of your talents at Winkfield. . . . . It would cheer the evening of my days to receive a line from you; for I am, with much sincerity, your old and attached friend,

E. W. GRINFIELD

Mr. de Quincey was in his seventy-fifth year at the time of his decease. Students of his writings will remember the mingled humour and pathos that flicker so oddly through that passage at the close of the appendix to the earlier editions of the "Confessions," in which he anticipatingly disposes of his own body.

"No man, I suppose, employs much of his time on the phenomena of his own body without some regard for it; whereas the reader sees that, so far from looking upon mine with any complacency or regard, I hate it and make it the object of my bitter ridicule and contempt; and should not be displeased to know that the la[illegible] which the law inflicts upon the bodie[illegible] malefactors might hereafter fall upon it [illegible] fication of my sincerity in saying this, I [illegible] the following offer. Like other men, I have part[illegible] fancies about the place of my burial: having live[illegible] chiefly in a mountainous region, I rather cleave to the conceit that a grave in a green churchyard, amongst the ancient and solitary hills, will be a sublimer and more tranquil place of repose for a philosopher than any in the hideous golgothas of London. Yet if the gentleme[illegible] of Surgeons' Hall think that any benefit can redoun[illegible] to their science, from inspecting the appearances in th[illegible] body of an opium-eater, let them speak but a word, an[illegible]

I will take care that mine shall be legally secured to them, *i.e.*, as soon as I have done with it myself. Let them not hesitate to express their wishes upon any scruples of false delicacy and consideration for my feelings. I assure them they will do me too much honour by 'demonstrating' on such a crazy body as mine; and it will give pleasure to anticipate this post-humous revenge and insult inflicted upon that which has caused me so much suffering in this life. Such bequests are not common; reversionary benefits contingent upon the death of the testator are indeed dangerous to announce in many cases; of this we have a remarkable instance in the habits of a Roman prince, who used, upon any notification made to him by rich persons that they had left him a handsome estate in their wills, to express his entire satisfaction at such arrangements, and his gracious acceptance of those loyal legacies; but then, if [illegible]estators neglected to give him immediate possession [illegible]roperty, if they traitorously 'persisted in living' [illegible]*re perse rarent*, as Suetonius expresses it), he was highly provoked, and took his measures accordingly. In those times, and from one of the worst of the Cæsars, we might expect such conduct; but I am sure that from English surgeons at this day I need look for no expressions of impatience, or of any other feelings but such as are answerable to that pure love of science, and all its interests, which induces me to make such an offer."

No such fate, as he himself with gentlest humour had suggested, awaited that fragile body; and, though a grave among the Westmoreland mountains would have

been most fitting, there can be no sense of discord in thinking that on the spot where it now rests, beside the remains of her whom he so loved and mourned, the Edinburgh Castle rock looks gravely down, while the statue of Wilson is almost within sight.

Ever yours most truly,
Thomas de Quincey.

APPENDIX.

I.

A MEDICAL VIEW OF MR. DE QUINCEY'S CASE.

By Surgeon-Major W. C. B. EATWELL, M.D., F.R.S.,
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, LONDON;
AND FORMERLY
PRINCIPAL OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE, CALCUTTA, AND MEMBER OF THE SENATE
OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.

MANY years have now elapsed since I first read the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," by Thomas de Quincey; and apart from the question of the psychological condition of the gifted author of the book, apart from the ethical question involved in his inordinate use, or, as must be admitted, abuse of opium, there arose in my mind certain medical considerations of no small interest and importance, which I will now briefly state. I came to the conclusion that De Quincey had for a great period of his life suffered from a terrible and distressing affection of the gastric nerves called gastrodynia; and that to this more or less purely neuralgic affection was superadded an inflammatory condition, probably with ulceration (chronic gastric ulcer)

of the mucous membrane of the stomach; and that whatever might have been the degree of abuse of opium, this drug had in reality been the means of preserving and prolonging life. I have characterised this affection of the gastric nerves as a terrible and distressing affection, and I will explain my reasons for having done so. At the time to which I am alluding, I was a medical officer in the Indian army, and during my experience of several years in medical charge of a civil station and district in Bengal, I met with a large number of these cases of gastrodynia, the disease exhibiting itself (as I shall explain more fully subsequently) in a peculiarly aggravated form amongst the rice-eating inhabitants of Bengal, and driving the unfortunate sufferers very frequently to the commission of suicide.

About the same period, there appeared in the medical journals of London a series of papers by Dr. Brinton, calling attention to the specific character of gastric ulcer, and indicating opium as pre-eminently the remedy for its c[illegible]. I believe that these circumstances tended to impress the medical aspects of De Quincey's case on my mind at the moment, and subsequent events have caused it to be renewed in my recollection. My attention for some years after quitting my appointment in Bengal was specially directed to opium, from the fact of my having, as civil surgeon of Ghazeepore, been entrusted with the duties of opium examiner to the Benares Opium Agency.

It is by no means easy to gain, from the writings of Thomas de Quincey, information sufficiently definite to enable one to state his case clearly, in its medical aspects. The man is so intensely intellectual, so little of a materialist, that when he does condescend to allude to bodily symptoms, it is only in a general way, and rather with a view of dwelling on their bearing on his mental condition or on

their consequences, than for the purpose of exciting sympathy and interest, by depicting the material phenomena attending his state of disease. Indeed, some of the most significant medical facts in his "Confessions" and "Autobiographic Sketches" are only mentioned parenthetically, whilst others of the highest importance in their medical bearing are altogether omitted.

In order, however, to form an opinion of De Quincey's case, in any degree satisfactory, it is essential to take a very broad view of it; and it is impossible to separate the phenomena of his bodily ailments from the mental manifestations which accompanied them—manifestations which dated even from early childhood, and which had their origin in constitutional and hereditary predispositions. I proceed, therefore, to consider, in the first place, the hereditary predispositions which may have determined the peculiar idiosyncrasies, bodily and mental, of Thomas de Quincey.

The father of De Quincey died at the age of thirty-nine [redacted]nsumption, after having spent many years in southern [redacted]s, in the vain hope of averting the malady. His [redacted] sister, Jane, died at the age of three and a half years, the cause of her death not being given in the Autobiography.

His second sister, Elizabeth, appears to have been a remarkable girl. De Quincey speaks of her "mature intellectual grandeur;" and of her head, for its "superb development," being "the astonishment of science." This sister was carried off at the age of nine by hydrocephalus; and in this we see the hereditary tendency from the father acting on the child, as the disease was probably due to tubercular meningitis, the tubercular poison being deposited in the brain of the child. At this time, it might have been apprehended that a tendency to specific cerebral disease, similar to that developed in the sister, might have

been looked for in the brother, so precocious did the intellect of the young boy appear, and so similar in its emotional and imaginative character was it to that of the deceased sister. Is it possible that the hereditary tendency to tuberculosis in Thomas de Quincey, which in infancy might have attacked the brain, as in the case of the sister, and later in life might have shown itself in the lungs, could have been held in check by any agencies extraneous to the system? In his "Confessions" (pp. 245-247), De Quincey writes as follows:—"At the commencement of my opium career, I had myself been pronounced repeatedly a martyr-elect to pulmonary consumption." "Without something like a miracle in my favour, I was instructed to regard myself a condemned subject." "These opinions were pronounced by the highest authorities in Christendom, viz., the physicians at Clifton and the Bristol hot wells." "Out of eight children I was the one who most closely inherited the bodily conformation of a father who had died of consumption at the early age of thirty-nine." "I offered at the first glance a medical eye every symptom of phthisis broadly conspicuously developed. The hectic colours in the [illegible] the nocturnal perspirations, the growing embarrassment of the respiration, and other expressions of gathering feebleness under any attempts at taking exercise, all these symptoms were steadily accumulating between the age of twenty-two and twenty-four." De Quincey then goes on to say, that all these symptoms were "arrested" by "the use, continually becoming more regular, of opium," and that he finally effected so absolute a conquest over all preliminary symptoms, as could not have failed to fix on him "the astonishment of Clifton." Now, without offering any opinion of my own on this point, I will content myself with the following quotation from Dr Brinton's book on "Ulcer of the Stomach," as having special reference to the case of

De Quincey, as I am disposed to view it, both as regards his hereditary tendency to tuberculosis and to the condition of his stomach. Dr. Brinton writes (page 143), "I am anxious specially to urge upon the profession the importance of giving opium in this dangerous and frequent disease (ulcer of the stomach), with just the same views as those with which I suspect it has long been employed in phthisis."

But I have already mentioned that there were certain manifestations in infancy, which appeared to indicate that the brain might then have suffered from tubercular disease, as in the case of the sister; and it may be asked whether there were any agencies operating to keep this tendency in check at that early period. In the "Autobiographic Sketches" it is affirmed that Thomas de Quincey suffered from ague during the second and third years of his infancy, and it is quite possible that the impoverishment of the blood under the malarious poison may have rendered it less stimulating to the nervous centres, at that age specially sensitive, and have [illegible]s, to some extent, saved the brain. What gives colour to this hypothesis is the circumstance that some of the older physicians (Doctors Wells, Cleghorn, Weekes, Harrison, &c.), who wrote about the end of the last century and the beginning of the present, maintained that there were facts to show that the malarious poison of ague was antagonistic to the development of consumption. Although the proposition of these writers was subsequently controverted, Dr. Copland does not hesitate to say that, "from several facts with which I am acquainted, it is not quite devoid of truth."*

"I am not aware that any other of the brothers and sisters suffered from tubercular disease, but enough has been

* Copland's "Medical Dictionary," page 1147.

advanced to indicate that Thomas de Quincey showed decided evidences of a predisposition in that direction. I now pass to the mental and moral peculiarities of Thomas de Quincey; merely alluding to the description of his three brothers, as given in the Autobiographic Sketches, as showing that each presented a marked individuality of character, doubtless dependent more or less on inherited physical constitution, and indicating some constitutional impatience, which rendered them more or less intolerant of control. The mental and moral peculiarities of Thomas de Quincey himself showed themselves at a very early age, even in infancy; and it is impossible not to see that the influences brought to bear on him by his sister Elizabeth, in his earliest years, affected De Quincey's conduct throughout life. The first chapter in the Autobiographic Sketches, in which the years of early childhood, the influence of his sister Elizabeth and her death, are described, is a composition of wonderful beauty in every sense. In it, De Quincey says, that if he should return thanks to Providence for all the separate blessings of his early situation, he would single out as worthy of special commemoration that he "lived in rustic solitude;" "that this solitude was in England;" that his infant feelings "were moulded by the gentlest of sisters, and not by horrid pugilistic brothers;" finally, "that I and they were dutiful and loving members of a pure, holy, and magnificent church."

The beloved sister dies, and the shock to the sensitive heart of the brother is great. He manages surreptitiously to obtain access to the chamber in which is his sister's corpse, and when there, falls evidently into a condition of cataleptic ecstasy. He says, "I have reason to believe that a *very* long interval had elapsed during this wandering or suspension of my perfect mind;" but the vision present to his imagination during this state is nevertheless detailed in

a passage of singular beauty, and it deserves to be carefully noted, as it proves how morbidly active was the imagination at this early age of six years, and how unnecessary it is to attribute to the action of opium at a subsequent period that which may be ascribed to an abnormally exalted imagination. This vision or illusion took a firm hold of the imagination for some time, and was repeated in after years.

After his sister's death, the bereaved boy withdrew himself as much as possible into retirement. "All day long, when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds, about the house, or in the neighbouring fields." "At this time, and under this influence of rapacious grief, that grasped at what it could not obtain, the faculty of shaping images in the distance out of slight elements, and grouping them after the yearnings of the heart, grew upon me in morbid excess." Thus, De Quincey describes that at this period, when the supplication was made in the Litany on behalf of sick people and young children, and when, from his seat in church, there might be visible through the window some fleecy clouds in a blue sky, his imagination would convert these into beds bearing sick children to heaven, whilst shadowy arms would be stretched to receive them, whilst he himself mounted towards heaven on the billows of harmony created by the organ. In all this we see self-surrender to a poetic imagination, under the influence of deep grief, wounded affection, and religious exaltation.

At this time, he declares that so great was his dejection, that under the morbid languishing of grief he must have pined into an early grave, had not events happened which compelled him "suddenly to assume the harness of life." The occurrence which now roused him was the return of his father from abroad, the father who had been hitherto

a stranger to him, and who now arrived, in the last stage of consumption. At the end of a few weeks the father died.

And now his eldest brother, five or six years his senior (or nearly double his age), comes home. This brother had also up to this time been a stranger to Thomas de Quincey, owing to his unruly character having kept him from home.

The estimate which this elder brother forms of the character of his younger brother Thomas, as given in the "Autobiographic Sketches," is amusing. "My brother very naturally despised me, and from his exceeding frankness, he took no pains to conceal that he did." "Physically, therefore, and intellectually, he looked upon me as below notice; but, morally, he assured me that he would give me a written character of the very best description. 'You're honest,' he said; 'you're willing though lazy; you would pull, if you had the strength of a flea; and though a monstrous coward, you don't run away.'" But the younger brother was evidently by no means deficient in personal courage. Under the leadership of the aggressive elder brother, a st[illegible]g feud was established with the boys of a factory, which the lads required to pass daily on their way to their tutor's, and in the daily skirmishes which took place, the younger appears to have acquitted himself courageously, and with loyalty to his elder brother. He admits, however, that he entered into these encounters without any of the animus which inspired his elder brother. The account given in the Autobiography of the employments and amusements of the brothers and sisters at this time, shows a varied reading on the part of the young people, and an interest in questions usually out of the range of such young students. Speaking of the elder brother, De Quincey writes: "Books he detested, except such as he happened to write himself; and these were not a few. On all subjects known to man,

from the Thirty-Nine Articles of the English Church to pyrotechnics, legerdemain, magic, thaumaturgy, and necromancy, he favoured the world (which world was the nursery where I lived with my sisters) with his select opinions. On this last subject he wrote a treatise, 'How to raise a ghost; and, when you've got him down, to keep him down.'" It is difficult to understand whether much of the extravagance is really intended, or whether it be burlesque. The whole suggests, however, great cleverness on the part of the young people, with inclination to allow the fancy to run wild. But that this licence in the case of Thomas de Quincey, at this time carried him to the verge of fixed delusion, and fostered a perilous loss of command over healthy thought, is shown by the ludicrous incidents related in the "Autobiography," when the elder brother constitutes himself imaginary king of an imaginary kingdom of Tigrosylvania, and the younger De Quincey king of an imaginary kingdom of Gombroon. At page 76, speaking of this fanciful freak, De Quincey writes:

"Reader! do not laugh! I lived for ever under the terror of two separate wars in two separate worlds; one against the factory boys, in a real world of flesh and blood, of stones and brickbats, of flight and pursuit, that were anything but figurative; the other in a world purely aerial, where all the combats and the sufferings were absolute moonshine. And yet the simple truth is—that, for anxiety and distress of mind, the reality (which almost every morning's light brought round) was as nothing in comparison of that dream-kingdom which rose like a vapour from my own brain, and which apparently, by the fiat of my will, could be for ever dissolved. Ah! but no; I had contracted obligations to Gombroon; I had submitted my conscience to a yoke; and, in secret truth, *my will had no autocratic power.* Long contemplation of a shadow, earnest study for

the welfare of that shadow, sympathy with the wounded sensibilities of that shadow under accumulated wrongs, these bitter experiences, nursed by brooding thought, had gradually frozen that shadow into a region of reality far denser than the material realities of brass or granite." This is a remarkable passage, as it points out, with marvellous lucidity of description, the mode of growth of a mental delusion; and in the sentence I have given in italics is contained the explanation of the particular mental deficiency of controlling power, in consequence of which the imagination obtained such mastery.

Fortunately for the young enthusiastic dreamer, however, the will had still sufficient power to direct the really powerful mind into other trains of thought, and thus the gulf of monomania was escaped. However, as this curious incident is still further developed in the Autobiography, it becomes clear that, in this child philosopher (he could have been only seven or eight years old at this time), free scope was deliberately given to the imagination, from a belief in the supremacy of spirit over matter. Thus at page 78 occurs this passage: "To make a strife overwhelming by a thousandfold to the feelings, it must not deal with gross material interests, but with such as rise into the world of dreams, and act upon the nerves through spiritual and not through fleshly torments." Is not the spirit of the Platonic philosophy latent in this quotation?

But now comes the curious *denouement* of this incident. The tutor has left lying on his table the works of Lord Monboddo, and the elder brother stumbles on the disquisition, in which his Lordship propounds the evolutionist theory, that mankind are descended from apes, and originally had tails. "My brother," writes De Quincey, "mused on this reverie, and in a few days published an extract from some scoundrel's travels in Gombroon, according to which

the Gombroonians had not emerged from this early condition of apedom." "Overwhelming to me and stunning was the ignominy of this humble discovery." The brother, "with an air of consolation, suggested that I might even now, without an hour's delay, compel the whole nation to sit down for six hours a day," for the purpose, of course, of approximating them to human form by a process of natural attrition."

This might seem the very burlesque of unreality but for what follows, which shows that with the younger brother all was as reality. "How much it would have astonished Lord Monboddo to find himself made answerable—virtually made answerable by the evidence of secret tears—for the misery of an unknown child in Lancashire; yet night and day these silent memorials of suffering were accusing him as the founder of a wound that could not be healed." I have dwelt thus long on this curious incident, as it throws much light on the mental idiosyncrasy of Thomas de Quincey, and relieves us from the necessity of considering many of his abnormal mental phenomena in after years as being due to the action of opium.

The next incident in the biography, is one which reveals the great tenderness of disposition of the young boy, and his great sympathy with helplessness and suffering, even in objects naturally repulsive. He accidentally discovers in his tutor's family two twin daughters, of weak intellect, who are employed in domestic drudgery, and treated unkindly. He explains that they are deaf and repulsive in appearance, though affectionate towards each other. Instead of shunning them, he kisses them affectionately when he meets them. This incident may be considered in connection with certain episodes in the London experiences of the "Confessions." He idealises equally in each case. The helpless suffering, the misery of misfortune,

are what he sees and feels in both instances; the material frames which contain them are only secondary objects. The period of infancy is considered by De Quincey to have extended to this point. He claims a power in his childish eye to detect grandeur and pomp of beauty, not seen by others in certain instances, and refers it to an individual mental constitution.

In his twelfth year, De Quincey enters the Grammar School at Bath, and distinguishes himself as a writer of Latin verses. He there receives an injury to the head by a blow from a ruler, which necessitates his leaving school; the operation of trephining being even talked of. But he adds, "I certainly exaggerated my internal feelings, without meaning to do so, and this misled my medical attendants."

He then goes to school at Winkfield, and after one year's residence there, and in his fifteenth year, he "first stepped into the world." Of his visits to Ireland and London with Lord Westport it is needless to speak, beyond that they show the young man's mental acquirements and tastes to have been such as fitted him for the companionship of his seniors in years, and of the high in social position. Subsequently, in his visit to Laxton, Lady Carbery speaks of him as h[illegible] Admirable Crichton, and makes continual demands on him for the solution of difficulties, and for the translation and meaning of Greek words in the New Testament, as applied to questions of theological doctrine. He speaks of the expansion of his intellect under this exercise, and it is impossible not to feel that his scholarship and intelligence must have been of a high order at this period, when he was a boy of some fifteen or sixteen years of age.

It was now decided that he should enter the Grammar School at Manchester, preparatory to going to Oxford, and at the Manchester school commence the physical ailments which appear to have been prolonged through life.

The first onset of disease of the digestive organs in Thomas de Quincey occurred in his seventeenth year, when he was a pupil at the Grammar School at Manchester. The attack itself he describes as "a torpor of the liver;" but attended apparently by an impairment of the general health, derangement of the digestion, and by hypochondriasis. The causes of this derangement of health are sufficiently indicated in the "Autobiographic Sketches." De Quincey was anxious to go at once to Oxford, and evidently had no sympathy with the boyish associates with whom he was now brought in contact. He speaks of the "premature expansion of his mind" as already weighing on him with "sickening oppression," and rendering him intolerant of boyish society. Then, there was no reasonable time given at the school for a due amount of exercise, which De Quincey always found essential to his well-being; so that, by the end of a year and a half, he writes of these causes, that they began "to eat more corrosively into my peace of mind than I had ever anticipated." And now he adds, "that over and above the killing oppression to my too sensitive system of the monotonous school tasks and the ruinous want of exercis , I had fallen under medical advice the most misleading that it is possible to imagine." He was treated "by drastic medicines varied without end, which fearfully exasperated the complaint;" whilst he expresses the belief that the torpor of the liver under which he was labouring might have been put right in three days by the employment of mercury. It is more than probable, however, that the condition of ill-health into which he had fallen, and of which inactivity of the liver was one symptom, could only have been overcome by a removal, for a time at least, of all the agencies which had occasioned it, and by a change of hygienic conditions generally. He is roused to a better state of health by the presence for a time of a party of valued

friends in Manchester; but he adds, "Lady C. retired like some golden pageant amongst the clouds, thick darkness succeeded; the ancient torpor re-established itself, and my health grew distressingly worse. Then it was, after dreadful self-conflicts, that I took the unhappy resolution of which the results are recorded in the 'Confessions.'" In the "Confessions" De Quincey writes, speaking of this epoch, "Those who have ever suffered from a profound derangement of the liver may happen to know that, of human despondencies, through all their infinite gamut, none is more deadly." Having therefore in vain endeavoured to obtain from his guardians a release from his school, and possessed by the idea that fresh air and exercise were essential to his recovery, he escaped from school, and betook himself to Wales; walking in the first instance to Chester, a distance of forty miles, in two days.

A week's pedestrian travelling in the Carnarvonshire mountains now "effected a revolution in his health, such as left nothing to complain of." To the condition of his health during his further sojourn of two or three months in Wales, De Quincey makes no special allusion; and, in fact, in his later editions of the "Confessions," he omits the important passage in the first edition which I shall now quote, and which, I believe, gives the true clue to the origin of that stomach derangement, from which he appears to have suffered so much torment during his after life, and which apparently drove him ultimately to the habitual use of opium. He had been only a few weeks in lodgings in Wales, when a misunderstanding with the landlady arose, with the result given in the subjoined extract.

"I left the lodgings the self-same hour, and this turned out a very unfortunate occurrence for me, because, living henceforward at inns, I was drained of my money very rapidly. In a fortnight I was reduced to short allowance, that is, I

could allow myself only one meal a day. From the keen appetite produced by constant exercise and mountain air acting on a youthful stomach, I soon began to suffer greatly on this slender regimen, for the single meal which I could venture to order was coffee or tea. Even this, however, was at length withdrawn, and afterwards, so long as I remained in Wales, I subsisted either on blackberries, hips, haws, &c., or on the casual hospitality which I now and then received in return for such little services as I had an opportunity of rendering." Whilst his diet was as above detailed, De Quincey writes in the "Confessions" that for some weeks he carried a canvas tent not bigger than an umbrella, manufactured by himself, and that, with no more shelter than it was able to afford, he passed on an average nine nights out of each fortnight on the hillsides. No specific mention is made of the immediate effect of these hardships, but it is not difficult to imagine what would naturally be the consequences to a delicate lad of seventeen, barely convalescent from an attack of liver derangement, with his mucous membrane in a state of irritation from a continued course of drastics, being reduced for weeks to a diet of wild berries, and passing his nights on the bare damp sides of the Welsh mountains, with the accompaniment of atmospheric moisture usual in these localities. Such agencies might well be expected to lay the foundation of serious gastric derangement, not only of a neuralgic, but of an inflammatory character. From Wales the young wanderer found his way to London, and was there subjected to a continuance of extreme hardships, both in the deprivation of food, and in passing the nights without adequate shelter or protection from cold. His symptoms and actual state are not clearly detailed at this time, but they are to be gleaned from such passages as the following in the "Confessions:"—"When I was not more than usually ill"

(page 163). "But my sleep distressed me more than my watching; for besides the tumultuousness of my dreams (which were only not so awful as those which I shall have hereafter to describe as produced by opium), my sleep was never more than what is called dog-sleep, so that I could hear myself moaning, and very often I was awakened suddenly by my own voice. About this time a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me at different periods of my life—viz., a sort of twitching (I know not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach), which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the efforts to relieve it constantly awakening me, at length I slept only from exhaustion; and through increasing weakness (as I said before) I was constantly falling asleep and constantly awaking." There was "no rest that was not a prologue to terror; no sweet tremulous pulses of restoration that did not suddenly explode through rolling clamours of fiery disruption." Subsequent to this, the hapless boy, when seated at night on a doorstep, falls back in a state in which he declares that, "from the sensations I then had, I felt an inner conviction that without some powerful and reviving stimulus, I should either have died on the spot, or should at least have sunk to a point of exhaustion from which all reascent under my friendless circumstances would soon have become hopeless." A glass of spiced port wine is given to him, which he says "acted on my empty stomach (*which at that time would have rejected all solid food*) with an instantaneous power of restoration." From this statement it may be inferred that rejection of solid food by the stomach was experienced and dreaded at that period; and the symptom is important.

But we have more explicit evidence regarding this symp-

tom in the account he immediately gives of a subsequent experience at Eton:—

"Lord Desert placed before me a most magnificent breakfast. It was really so, but in my eyes it seemed trebly magnificent, from being the first regular meal, the first 'good man's table,' that I had sat down to for months. Strange to say, however, I could scarcely eat anything. On the day when I first received my £10 bank-note, I had gone to a baker's shop and bought a couple of rolls: this very shop I had, two months or six weeks before, surveyed with an eagerness of desire which it was almost humiliating to me to recollect. I remembered the story about Otway, and feared that there might be danger in eating too rapidly. But I had no need for alarm; my appetite was quite sunk, and *I became sick before I had eaten half of what I had bought.* This effect from eating, what approached to a meal, I continued to feel for weeks, or, when I did not experience any nausea, *part of what I ate was rejected, sometimes with acidity, sometimes immediately, and without any acidity.* On the present occasion, at Lord Desert's table, I found myself not at all better than usual; and, in the midst of luxuries, I had no appetite. . . . . I am convinced, however, that wine, although it gave me momentary relief and pleasure, contributed to strengthen my malady, for the tone of my stomach was apparently ite sunk; but by a better regimen it might sooner, and haps effectually, have been revived."

Further on in the "Confessions," when alluding to this period of his life, he says, "And although it is true that the calamities of my novitiate in London had struck root so deeply in my bodily constitution, that afterwards they shot up and flourished afresh, and grew into a noxious umbrage, that has overshadowed and darkened my latter years, yet these second assaults of suffering were met with a fortitude more confirmed, with the resources of a mature intellect, and

with alleviations how deep! from sympathising affection." Still further on in the "Confessions," at page 216, he adds, "Whether this illness of 1812 had any share in that of 1813, I know not, but so it was, that in the latter year I was attacked by a most appalling irritation of the stomach, in all respects the same as that which had caused me so much suffering in youth, and accompanied by a renewal of all the old dreams." Again, at page 232 is the following: "The boyish sufferings, whether in Wales or London, pressing upon an organ peculiarly weak in my bodily system, viz., the stomach, caused that subsequent distress and irritability of the stomach which drove me to the use of opium, as the sole remedy potent enough to control it."

I now turn to evidences of specific stomach derangement, derived from sources other than the "Autobiography" and the "Confessions." Mr. Page has been good enough to furnish me with the following extract from a letter of De Quincey to Charles Knight, written in 1825.

"Anxiety, long continued with me of late years, in consequence of my opium-shattering, seizes on some frail part about the stomach, and produces a specific complaint, which very soon abolishes all power of thinking at all." Again, Mrs. Baird Smith (De Quincey's daughter) informs me that, in describing his sufferings, her father constantly alluded to them as a sensation of gnawing; nor is his daughter able to remember the time when her father was actually free from suffering; and further, "Mr. Hogg remembers distinctly Mr. de Quincey saying to Professor Wilson on one occasion, when he was suffering more than usual, that he could only represent his pains by some creature gnawing him." An incapacity for ordinary food is also alluded too. I am informed that he took solid food with great difficulty; that a couple of square inches of mutton of a particular cut was all that he could venture to take, and

that only in particularly favourable circumstances; that his most intimate friends said of him that he did not "know what it was to eat a dinner;" and that he himself declared, in writing to an old school-fellow in 1847, that, among many other ills, he had had "no dinner since parting from him in the eighteenth century." I am informed that when this distinguished man died, at the ripe age of seventy-five, he was attended by the late Dr. Warburton Begbie of Edinburgh, a physician of great eminence; and the family were informed at that time that there were no indications of active specific organic disease, but rather an exhaustion of the vital powers generally. No post-mortem examination was made.

From these disjointed and scattered notices, we have, I believe, materials for forming an opinion on the medical case of Thomas de Quincey; but before summing up the evidence, I will quote an extract from the Life of Richard Baxter, which has been kindly furnished to me by my friend Dr. Norman Chevers, lately Principal of the Medical College of Calcutta, as having an interesting bearing on the probable exciting cause of De Quincey's malady having originated in the crude irritating diet of wild berries in Wales. Dr. Chevers writes to me:—

"Richard Baxter attributes his great sufferings by flatulence, indigestion, &c., to the fact that he 'ate raw apples and pears and plums in great quantities for many years.' He speaks of apples as being of all things in the world his 'most deadly enemies.' He, however, says, 'I was never overwhelmed with melancholy. My distemper never went so far as to possess me with any inordinate fancies, or damp me with sinking sadness, although the physicians called it hypochondriac melancholy.'"

Let us now sum up the case of Thomas de Quincey. There was, in the first instance, general derangement of the

digestive organs accompanied by torpor of the liver and hypochondriasis. In combating that state, the stomach and digestive tract were subjected to the protracted irritation of drastic medicines. Whilst the stomach and digestive organs had barely recovered themselves from this state, they were again exposed to extreme irritation and derangement from food both injurious in quality and altogether deficient in quantity. There was, at the same time, exposure to great hardship, in the way of insufficient clothing and shelter. Evidences of distinct disease of the stomach manifested themselves under the forms of pain, spasm, and rejection of food, and these symptoms were repeated at intervals, in greater or less degree, throughout life; the irritation of the stomach being described in one place as appalling, and the character of the pain being described as a sensation of gnawing.

These symptoms indicate, in the first instance, severe nervous irritation or gastrodynia, with, I believe, a low inflammatory condition of the mucous coat of the stomach, proceeding at times to ulceration; not specific ulceration of a cancerous character, but the simple gastric ulcer, capable of cure under treatment and favourable conditions, yet liable to recur under any error in diet.

At the commencement of this paper, I alluded to gastrodynia as a terrible and distressing disease, under the torment of which the unfortunate sufferer was frequently driven to the commission of suicide. Amongst the Hindoos of Lower Bengal, living almost entirely on a vegetable diet, this complaint assumes an aggravated type, and I shall proceed to consider it more fully. In the "Indian Annals of Medical Science for the Year 1854," is a paper by my friend and old colleague, Dr. T. W. Wilson, entitled "On Painful Affections of the Stomach, termed by the Natives of Bengal, Peetsool.' Dr. Wilson points out in his paper that several diseased

conditions of the stomach, varying from a simple neuralgic condition of the gastric nerves, to ulceration of a simple or even specific cancerous character, are confounded by the natives under the common name of Peetsool, though the element common to them all, and on which the attention of the sufferer is naturally concentrated, is the pain by which these conditions are accompanied.

Dr. Wilson writes, "The pain is chiefly confined to the pit of the stomach, extending to the right hypogastrium; it is of a gnawing or cutting kind. The patients sometimes experience temporary relief from pressure, and they may be seen making it by cloths bound round the person, or with a ball placed on the pit of the stomach."

"So obstinate is this affection considered by the natives, that it is attributed to a weapon in the hands of Siva, and though that deity inflicts the blow, he cannot remove the disease; the sufferers in consequence often despair and seek relief in suicide."

My own experience, acquired in Bengal, in a district adjoining that in which Dr. Wilson was stationed, agrees entirely with what he has advanced regarding the character and severity of the disease, which I had frequent opportunities of observing. (I may add, that the suffering which it occasions I found best relieved by opium or morphia combined with bismuth or magnesia.) On referring to my note-book, I find that, from May 1847 to June 1849, during which time I was Civil Surgeon of the district of Pubna, out of a large number of cases of suicide, referred to me by the magistrate for official report, in as many as nine cases, the reason given by relatives for the fatal act was unbearable abdominal pain. It is true that all were not cases of Peetsool (or Sool, as I usually heard the disease designated), but in all, the fatal act of suicide was attributed to persistent unbearable pain in one or other of the abdo-

minal organs. In four cases the disease was distinctly declared to have been Sool (gastrodynia); in the fifth case, the pain was still referred to the digestive organs, but not specially to the stomach; and in the other cases the pain was described as having been abdominal, but was not specially localised.

Dr. Chevers, in his valuable work on "Indian Medical Jurisprudence," refers specially to this class of cases, and he gives a translation of a remarkable passage from the Hindoo Shastras, which shows that suicide is, by implication at least, permitted in these writings. The passage, moreover, is one of many occurring in the Hindoo Vedas and Shastras, which reveal the fact that, beneath the idolatrous excrescences with which the Hindoo creed has been buried, there exists a faith of rare power and beauty, in its assertion of the supremacy and indestructibility of spirit, and of the subordination and corruptibility of matter. Had the Hindoo sage received the later revelation, that the spirit is purified and elevated through its connection with bodily suffering, his creed would have come nearer to the perfect truth, and the hecatombs of victims who yearly have perished in India by their own acts would, like the Christian philosopher, have lived, and learned the Christian duty of resignation.

The following is the translation to which I have alluded :—

"A mansion with bones for its rafters and beams, with nerves for its cords, with muscles and blood for mortar, with skin for its outward covering, filled with no sweet perfume, but loaded with foul refuse—a mansion infested with sickness and sorrow, the seat of malady, haunted with the quality of darkness, incapable of standing long—such a mansion of the vital soul let its occupier always cheerfully quit."

I have, I believe, now fully established my proposition

that gastrodynia in its aggravated form is a terrible and distressing disease; and, in an aggravated form, I believe that Thomas de Quincey suffered from it. If he escaped from the promptings of the creed of the Hindoo sage, it was probably due to the teachings inaugurated in that infant nursery, where the brother and the saintly sister drew a common inspiration from that book, which "ruled and swayed" them "as mysteriously as music." That De Quincey should have suffered in an aggravated degree from any nervous irritation, might be inferred from his sensitive nervous temperament, and he appears to have been severely tried by neuralgic pains in the nerves of the face and jaws. But there is still a certain amount of light which may be thrown on the case of this sorely tried man, derivable from the researches of Dr. Brinton, who made a special study of gastric ulceration; and I have already stated my belief that, in addition to the purely nervous element in De Quincey's case, there was probably also gastric ulcer—ulcer of a simple, unspecific character, healing under opium and the regulation of diet, and recurring when the stomach was not carefully managed. I think this theory is borne out by the circumstances and exciting causes attending the outbreak of the attack, (commencing probably under the diet of hips and haws in Wales), and by the subsequent symptoms. Dr. Brinton, in dealing with the causes of this complaint, writes, that the disease "seems to fall with disproportionate severity and frequency on those who suffer from the ills implied by penury, excessive toil, insufficient and unwholesome food, foul air, mental anxiety, and those habits of intemperance which are the effect as well as cause of such misery." The last of these agencies we leave out of consideration; but the remaining agents in the catalogue of evils had undoubtedly exerted their full influence on the hapless boy, De Quincey. The character of the pain is

also insisted on by Dr. Brinton. In the earliest stages, little more than a feeling of weight, it becomes "a burning sensation, and at last a gnawing pain, that produces a kind of sickening depression." The following observation of Dr. Brinton regarding the recurrence of pain has a curious illustration, I believe, in the extract from De Quincey's letter to Charles Knight already quoted. "The partially subjective character of the pain in gastric ulcer receives a good illustration from the manner in which it is often affected by mental changes. Amongst these, we may specially allude to the depressing passions of sudden fear, anxiety, or anger, as frequently bringing on a paroxysm of pain, the severity and duration of which exceed those of the attacks produced by distension of the stomach by food."

This remark of Dr. Brinton regarding the inability of the stomach, when suffering from gastric ulcer or from its effects, to bear distension, without pain, gives a clue to De Quincey's general incapacity for ordinary solid food, either stimulating in quality or large in quantity. Supposing De Quincey to have been subject to gastric ulcer, it is evident that, even when healed, its tender cicatrix would be subjected to painful tension on occasion of any distension of the stomach, and thereby be a source, more or less, of continued suffering.

As regards treatment, I do not purpose alluding to any of the remedies recommended by Dr. Brinton, with the exception of opium, as it is my desire to show that, whether led instinctively or otherwise to that drug, it was, as far as human aid went, to opium that De Quincey was indebted for relief from grievous bodily anguish, and for the prolongation of his life to a ripe old age. Alluding to the injurious local action of alcoholic drinks in gastric ulcer, Dr. Brinton inquires, "whether there are no stimulants which may afford us the advantages of alcohol without its disadvantages?" "The importance of this question," he adds, "will

excuse my pointing out, that what I have already had occasion to say respecting the merits of opium will to some extent apply to the class of sedatives in general. But the peculiar stimulant effects of opium make it by far the most valuable of them all." "As regards mere facts, I am quite certain that, though the pain often present in these cases is of course an additional indication for the use of opium, yet it is by no means the chief (far less the only) guide to its administration. It is not as an anodyne, not even as a sedative, that opium seems to be most useful. On the contrary, my experience would lead me to conclude that it is especially in ulcers of long duration, of large size, of obstinate character, and in broken, exhausted constitutions, that this invaluable remedy comes most fully into play; and that the condition these circumstances presuppose being present, its use is not one whit less advantageous, even though the habitual pain is trifling, or though (far from having to replace the customary alcohol of the drunkard) it is prescribed for a patient who has been always of temperate (or even abstemious) habits." Dr. Brinton goes on to urge "the importance of giving opium in this dangerous and frequent disease," not only for the purpose of relieving pain or checking irritation, but also "to support the strength, to buoy up the nervous system, and to check the waste of the tissues generally."

Having conducted my argument to this point, therefore, I would submit, that the case of Thomas de Quincey, in its connection with the use of opium, must be regarded as one of bodily disease, for the control of which opium was the sole efficient remedy; and that this great writer cannot be considered an opium-eater (as he has styled himself) in the ordinary sense of the word. Opium was not resorted to by him, in the first instance, for sensuous gratification, but for the relief of acute suffering; and if, under the sensibly

curative action of the drug, it was continued for a long period, equally pertinacious were the assaults of the cruel malady which called for its employment. But let the eloquent writer speak for himself.

At page 1 of the "Confessions," he says he has often been asked how it was that he had become an opium-eater; and with reference to the third of certain suppositions he writes, "Thirdly and lastly, was it [yes, by passionate anticipation, I answer, before the question is finished], was it on a sudden, overmastering impulse derived from bodily anguish? Loudly I repeat, yes: loudly and indignantly, as in answer to a wilful calumny. Simply as an anodyne it was, under the mere coercion of pain the severest, that I first resorted to opium."

It was not, however, for his stomach ailment that opium was in the first instance taken, but to relieve the pain of neuralgia of the nerves of the face and jaws.

Again, at page 217 of the "Confessions," De Quincey writes, after stating that he had been attacked again "by a most appalling irritation of the stomach, in all respects the same as that which had caused" him "so much suffering in youth, and accompanied by a revival of all the old dreams:" "Now, then, it was only in the year 1813 that I became a regular and confirmed (no longer an intermitting) opium-eater. And here," he writes, "I find myself in a perplexing dilemma. Either, on the one hand, I must exhaust the reader's patience by such a detail of my malady, and of my struggles with it, as might suffice to establish the fact of my inability to wrestle any longer with irritation and constant suffering; or, on the other hand, by passing lightly over the critical part of my story, I must forego the benefit of a stronger impression left on the mind of the reader, and must lay myself open to the misconstruction of having slipped by the easy and gradual steps of self-indulging

persons, from the first to the final stage of opium-eating (a misconstruction to which there will be a lurking predisposition in most readers, from my previous acknowledgments)."

"No; believe all that I ask of you, viz., that I could resist no longer." "This, then, let me repeat; I postulate that, at the time I began to take opium daily, I could not have done otherwise. Whether, indeed, afterwards I might not have succeeded in breaking off the habit, even when it seemed to me that all efforts would be unavailing, and whether many of the innumerable efforts which *I did* make might not have been carried much further, and my gradual reconquests of lost ground might not have been followed up much more energetically—these are questions which I must decline." But when the writer adds a little further on, "I cannot face misery, whether my own or not, with an eye of sufficient firmness, and am little capable of encountering present pain for the sake of any reversionary benefit;" and when, towards the end of the "Confessions," at page 232, he adds, "The opium would probably never have been promoted into the dignity of a daily and a life-long resource, had it not proved itself to be the one sole agent equal to the task of tranquillising the miseries left behind by the youthful privations,"—when, I repeat, the author has made these statements, he entirely removes his case from the region of ethics into that of therapeutics. De Quincey's was not a case of opium-eating in the ordinary and objectionable sense of the word; it was one of the continued use of opium (very probably at times in unwarrantable excess), rendered necessary by persistent chronic disease. And, be it observed, quantities of the drug as enormous as those consumed at times by De Quincey have been given under medical sanction. In a case under the care of two distinguished physicians of Philadelphia,

the quantity of opium was gradually increased to "three pints of laudanum," "besides a considerable quantity of solid opium," in the twenty-four hours.* In this and in similar cases the amount of the drug must be regarded as the measure of the physical pain it was given to relieve.

The following extract from a private letter written by Colonel Baird Smith, of the Bengal Engineers, after the capture of Delhi, given in Sir John Kaye's "Sepoy War" (p. 547, vol. iii.), may be cited here, as it has an apposite bearing on this point:—

"An attack of camp scurvy had filled my mouth with sores, shaken every joint in my body, and covered me all over with livid spots, so that I was marvellously unlovely to look upon. A smart knock on the ankle-joint from the splinter of a shell that burst in my face, in itself, however, a mere bagatelle of a wound, had been of necessity neglected under the pressing and incessant calls upon me, and had grown worse and worse, till the whole foot below the ankle became a black mass, and seemed to threaten mortification. I insisted, however, on being allowed to use it till the place was taken, mortification or no; and though the pain was sometimes horrible, I carried my point and kept up to the last. On the day after the assault I had an unlucky fall on some bad ground, and it was an open question for a day or two whether I hadn't broken my left arm at the elbow. Fortunately it turned out to be only a severe sprain; but I am still conscious of the wrench it gave me. And, to crown the whole pleasant catalogue, I was worn to a shadow by a constant diarrhœa, and consumed as much opium, with as little effect, as would have done credit to my father-in-law (Mr. de Quincey)." Opium and brandy, he says, where, were his daily sustenance, and that they had

* Pereira's Materia Medica, p. 2111.

other effect upon him than that of increasing his capacity for work. "Appetite for food I had none, but I forced myself to eat sufficient to sustain life. . . . The excitement of the work was so great, that no lesser one seemed to have any chance against it; and I certainly never found my intellect clearer or my nerves stronger in my life. It was only my wretched body that was weak; and the moment the real work was done by our becoming complete masters of Delhi, I broke down without delay, and discovered that, if I wished to live, I must continue no longer the system that had kept me up till the crisis was past. With it passed away as if in a moment all desire to stimulate, and a perfect loathing of my late staff of life took possession of me."

Let it not for a moment be imagined that it is intended in any way by these remarks to countenance opium-eating as a mere vicious indulgence. In a perfectly healthy condition of the system, and in a well-balanced state of the mental faculties, I can conceive nothing but mischief to arise from the use of opium, casually or habitually, in any quantity sufficient to produce an appreciable physiological action on the mental or bodily functions. But what I would insist on is, that in the case of Thomas de Quincey there was not only not a healthy condition of system, but a want of healthy balance in the mental faculties—the imagination being so abnormally active even from the earliest infancy, as to dominate at times the reason, despite the fact that the intellectual powers were of a high order, amounting to genius. It may perhaps be said that the entire nervous system was in a state of nervous exaltation. Bearing this in mind, and that the general state of the nervous system was abnormal, it will be felt, that the action of opium in such a case might be likewise abnormal. I believe it to have been so in the case of De Quincey, from the time of its first employment, in an ordinary

medicinal dose, to assuage the pain of a neuralgic attack. Medical men are in the habit of giving opium in such doses daily, yet I never heard of such effects from a single dose being recorded, as are given at page 195 of the "Confessions;" indeed, few have the philosophic faculty of turning the mind upon itself, and subjecting its manifestations to such analytic scrutiny.

To the majority, probably, the effect of a single medicinal dose of opium, given under such circumstances, would be, in addition to the relief of pain, to produce some hours of sleep, more or less disturbed by dreams, with a light head on waking, some nausea perhaps, and a parched mouth.

De Quincey speaks of a "revulsion," a resurrection from the lowest depths "of the inner spirit," "an apocalypse of the world within," with a vanishing of his pains. Further on he says that, whilst "wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary (if taken in a proper manner), introduces amongst them the most exquisite order, regulation, and harmony;" and that, in the case of the opium-eater, he "feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount—that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity, and high over all the great light of the majestic intellect." It is requisite not to be carried away by these eloquent utterances. Opium cannot communicate to the brain any power or faculty of which it is not already possessed; although, (as in De Quincey's case), by subduing an enemy, which had by its painful assaults on a remote part of the nervous system temporarily paralysed the central powers of the intellect, it could again restore harmony of action to these powers. It could in no way *create* moral affections, though it might resuscitate them, by removing from them an overpowering load of physical suffering. It could add no iota to the great light of the majestic intellect, although when this might be suffering a temporary eclipse—as was

too frequently the case with this great writer, when his gnawing malady pervaded his entire consciousness with torments which dominated the power of thought—it might, under such circumstances, restore that great light, by dissipating the shadow that obscured it.

De Quincey attached an importance to his dream-experiences which needs no special consideration. They did not originate with the use of opium, as the history of his years of infancy and youth clearly show; but so fascinated was this intensely intellectual man with everything pertaining to mind, that its workings under the lawless guidance of imagination—the children of his fancy—appeared to have had a claim on his affection which, perhaps, with greater safety, might have been entirely reserved for the offspring of his rigorously controlled thought.

It is requisite to say, in conclusion, that Thomas de Quincey, about the year 1845, or fourteen years before his death, relinquished the excessive use of opium; from which it may be inferred that the lesion of the stomach, from which he had suffered for so many years of his life, had by that time ceased to occasion him suffering; and this would be in accordance with the fact that Dr. Warburton Begbie, at the time of this distinguished man's death, was unable to discover the existence of specific disease. This is further confirmed by the recollection of Mr. James Hogg. He states that though, during the first year or two of his acquaintance with Mr. de Quincey, he heard him complain of "gnawing pains in the stomach," in the later years any reference to such pains ceased to be made.

II.

DE QUINCEY'S FATHER AS AN AUTHOR.

The reader will have noticed that De Quincey speaks of his father as being an anonymous author, and though he does not mention the title of any of his writings, or where they appeared, he makes explicit reference to an account of a tour he had printed. Owing to the kindness of Mr. A. Ireland, of Manchester, we are glad to be able to extract the following from "Notes and Queries" for November 20, 1875, as likely to have an interest of its own :—

"DE QUINCEY'S FATHER: 'TOUR IN THE MIDLAND COUNTIES IN 1772.'—Who was the author of 'A Tour in the Midland Counties of England, performed in the Summer of 1772 (by T— Q—),' which appeared in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' of 1774 (vol. xliv. p. 206, continued in four following numbers), and which, the editor tells us in a note, 'was the first production of the writer's pen?' I should at once have ascribed it, as the initials agree, to Thomas Quincey, the father of the opium-eater, who published, his son tells us, a similar tour, but which, notwithstanding a long-continued quest by myself and others, has not yet turned up. As, however, he would only be nineteen when the tour was made, and twenty-one when it was printed in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' the doubt is whether the composition is exactly that which so young a person would be likely to have produced. The style would rather seem to indicate the writer to have been a man of mature years and experience. Still, this is not conclusive as an objection, as early acquaintance with the world and its business ripens the mind quite as much as advance of years. Thomas Quincey's success in mercantile pursuits—he died at the age of thirty-nine—and the codicils to his will, giving directions as to the carrying on and disposal of his business, are sufficient to show that he was by no means an ordinary person, and his son tells us that he had been a great traveller. The 'Tour in the Midland Counties' appears to have been made from London, to which the tourist returned on its conclusion. Thomas Quincey had not then

settled in Manchester, and accordingly his name is not found in the Directories of 1772 and 1773. If the 'Tour' in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' was really written by him, the probability is that his son, though aware of the fact of his father having composed such a journal, did not know where it had appeared, otherwise it would be difficult to account for his having barely noticed the existence of a production in which he might have taken a just pride, and which would have afforded him a paternal peg which he might have hung many a digression and disquisition upon. Thomas de Quincey was only seven when his father died, and from absence and other circumstances had little personal knowledge of him. In that fine piece of painting, his description of his father's return home in a dying state, he does not attempt to portray his features or give any idea of what he was like in person. I ought, perhaps, to mention that in the 'Tour' the writer has a good deal to say in the description of Boston, in Lincolnshire, and I find in the will of Thomas Quincey that Henry Gee, of Boston, merchant, was appointed one of his trustees, and that a legacy is given to 'his respected friend and kinsman John Oxenford,' who resided in that neighbourhood. JAS. CROSSLEY."

III.

MR. DE QUINCEY'S FAMILY.

Mr. de Quincey's family consisted of five sons and three daughters, as follow :—

1. William, who died about 1835, in his eighteenth year, referred to by his father as a student of great promise.
2. Margaret, who died in 1871, in Ireland, at the residence of her husband, Mr. Robert Craig.
3. Horace, who was an officer in the 26th Cameronians, went to China with Sir Hugh Gough, was engaged in the campaign of 1841–42, and died there of some kind of malarious fever in the end of 1842.

4. Francis, who began life as a clerk in Mr. Kelsall's office, but formed a liking for medical studies, and, under great disadvantages, educated himself at Edinburgh for the medical profession. He was for sometime assistant-physician at the Lunatic Asylum, Morningside, Edinburgh, and then went out to Brazil, and was on the way to success, when, returning to his home up-country from Rio Janeiro in 1861, he was seized with yellow fever, and succumbed from want of medical treatment; there being no doctor at the place where he was taken ill.
5. Paul Frederick, who was an officer in the 70th Queen's Regiment, carried the Queen's Colours at the Battle of Sobraon, and served all through the Indian Mutiny. In 1857 he came home on promotion, and accompanied his father on that trip to Ireland. He returned to India; and attracting the notice of Sir Hugh Rose (Lord Strathnairn), was made brigade-major. This appointment by merit he was obliged to relinquish, owing to his regiment being ordered to New Zealand for active service. From what he saw of the country there, he resolved to settle, and purchased land; but he again took service for a time as military secretary to General Galloway, when he was employed in organising the New Zealand Militia. For his services in this capacity he received from the Colonial Government a considerable grant of land, which, with his purchased property, he now holds, being married there.
6. Florence, married Colonel Baird Smith, who died in India, in 1861.
7. Julius, who died in 1833, about four years of age.
8. Emily.

IV.

MR. GRINFIELD AND HIS WORKS.

The Rev. E. W. Grinfield, who, in the last letter printed in this work, speaks of himself so modestly as a theological student, was the author of between twenty and thirty works of varying importance. His "Novum Testamentum Græcum, Editio Hellenistica. Scholia in N. T. instruxit atque ornavit E. Grinfield," published in 1843–48, in 4 vols. 8vo, was his greatest work. It was designed to show the close connection of the Greek Testament with the Septuagint. It contains upwards of 30,000 doctrinal and grammatical illustrations, which are arranged respectively under each verse for the convenience of the student and divine. Allibone says :—"We need hardly say that the labours of the editor have been great indeed; to quote from his preface : 'Per decem annos in hæc editione conficiendâ operam studiumque impensè elocavi.' He intended to have increased his labours by the addition of a threefold collation of the Hebrew, LXX., and New Testament. For an account of this truly great work we must refer to Horne's 'Bibl. Bibl.,' and the 'London Christian Remembrancer' for April 1848." As a natural sequel to his Hellentistic edition of the Greek Testament, he wrote an "Apology for the Septuagint,' in which its claims to biblical and canonical authority are stated and vindicated. This was published in 1850, and may rank as the next in value of his numerous works.

V.

WESTMORELAND ARCHITECTURE.

As an instance of the way in which De Quincey's peculiar love of the picturesque wanders, so to say, from its own centre of mere personal liking, to involve the wider interests of those with whom he was brought into contact, to find out subtle reasons for certain results or combinations of form, and to reunite them cunningly with the common and ordinary necessities of life, we may venture to quote this most ingenious and yet most simple description of the Cottage Architecture of Westmoreland. It is full of De Quincey's fine spirit :—

"The Westmoreland cottages, as a class, have long been celebrated for their picturesque forms, and very justly so; in no part of the world are cottages to be found more strikingly interesting to the eye by their general outlines, by the sheltered porches of their entrances, by their exquisite chimneys, by their rustic windows, and by the distribution of the parts. These parts are on a larger scale, both as to number and size, than a stranger would expect to find as dependencies and outhouses attached to dwellings so modest; chiefly from the necessity of making provision both in fuel for themselves, and in hay, straw, and brackens for the cattle, against the long winter. But, in praising the Westmoreland cottages, it must be understood that only those of the native dalesmen are contemplated; for as to those raised by the alien intruders—the 'lakers' or 'foreigners,' as they are sometimes called by the old indigenous possessors of the soil—these being designed to exhibit a 'taste' and an eye for the picturesque, are pretty often merely models of deformity, as vulgar and

as silly as it is well possible for any object to be, in a case where, after all, the workman, and obedience to custom, and the necessities of the ground, &c., will often step in to compel the architects into common-sense and propriety. The main defect in Scottish scenery, the eyesore that disfigures so many charming combinations of landscape, is the offensive style of the rural architecture; but still, even where it is worst, the *mode* of its offence is not by affectation and conceit, and preposterous attempts at realising sublime, gothic, or castellated effects in little gingerbread ornaments, and 'tobacco pipes,' and make-believe parapets and towers like kitchen or hothouse flues; but in the hard undisguised pursuit of mere coarse uses and needs of life. Too often, the rustic mansion, that should speak of decent poverty and seclusion, peaceful and comfortable, wears the most repulsive air of town confinement and squalid indigence; the house being built of substantial stone, three storeys high, or even four, the roof of massy slate; and everything strong which respects the future outlay of the proprietor; everything frail which respects the comfort of the inhabitant; windows broken or stuffed up with rags and old hats; steps and doors encrusted with dirt; and the whole tarnished with smoke. Poverty—how different the face it wears looking with meagre, staring eyes from such a city-dwelling as this, and when it peeps out, with rosy cheeks, from amongst clustering roses of woodbines, at a little lattice from a little one-storey cottage! Are, then, the main characteristics of the Westmoreland dwelling-houses imputable to superior taste? By no means. Spite of all that I have heard Mr. Wordsworth and others say in maintaining that opinion, I, for my part, do and must hold, that the dalesmen produce none of the happy effects which frequently arise in their domestic architecture under any search after beautiful forms—a search which

they despise with a sort of Vandal dignity; no, nor with any sense of consciousness of their success. How then? Is it accident—mere casual good luck—that has brought forth, for instance, so many exquisite forms of chimneys? Not so; but it is this—it is good sense, on the one hand, bending and conforming to the dictates, or even the suggestions of the climate, and the local circumstances of the rocks, water, and currents of air, &c.; and, on the other hand, wealth sufficient to arm the builder with all suitable means for giving effect to his purpose, and to evade the necessity of make-shifts. But the radical ground of the interest attached to Westmoreland cottage-architecture lies in its submission to the determining agencies of the surrounding circumstances—such of them, I mean, as are permanent, and have been gathered from long experience. The porch, for instance, which does so much to take away from a house the character of a rude box pierced with holes for air, light, and ingress, has evidently been dictated by the sudden rushes of wind through the mountain "ghylls," which make some kind of protection necessary to the ordinary door: and this reason has been strengthened in cases of houses near to a road, by the hospitable wish to provide a sheltered seat for the wayfarer—most of these porches being furnished with one in each of the two recesses to the right and to the left. The long winter again, as I have already said, and the artificial prolongation of the winter, by the necessity of keeping the sheep long upon the low grounds, creates a call for large outhouses; and these, for the sake of warmth, are usually placed at right angles to the house, which has the effect of making a much larger system of parts than would otherwise arise. But, perhaps, the main feature which gives character to the pile of building is the roof, and, above all, the chimneys. It is the remark of an accomplished Edin

burgh artist, H. W. Williams, in the course of his strictures upon the domestic architecture of the Italians, and especially of the Florentines, that the character of buildings in certain circumstances, depends wholly or chiefly on the form of the roof or chimney. This, he goes on, is particularly the case in Italy, where more variety and taste is displayed in the chimneys than in the buildings to which they belong. These chimneys are as peculiar and characteristic as palm trees in a tropical climate. Again, in speaking of Calabria and the Ionian Islands, he says—"We were forcibly struck with the consequence which the beauty of the chimneys imparted to the character of the whole building." Now, in Great Britain, he complains with reason of the very opposite result; not the plain building ennobled by the chimney, but the chimney degrading the noble building; and in Edinburgh, especially, where the homely and inelegant appearance of the chimneys contrast most disadvantageously and offensively with the beauty of the buildings which they surmount. Even here, however, he makes an exception for some of the *old* buildings, whose chimneys, he admits, "are very tastefully decorated, and contribute essentially to the beauty of the general effect." It is probable, therefore—and many houses of the Elizabethan era confirm it, that a better taste prevailed, in this point, amongst our ancestors, both Scottish and English—that this elder fashion travelled, together with many other usages, from the richer parts of Scotland to the Borders, and thence to the Vales of Westmoreland, where they have continued to prevail from their affectionate adhesion to all patriarchial customs.

Some undoubtedly of these Westmoreland forms have been dictated by the necessities of the weather, and the systematic energies of human skill, from age to age, applied to the very difficult task of training smoke into obedience,

under the peculiar difficulties presented by the sites of Westmoreland houses. These are chosen, generally speaking, with the same good sense and regard to domestic comfort, as the primary consideration (without, however, disdainfully slighting the sentiment, whatever it were, of peace, of seclusion, of gaiety, solemnity, the special '*relligio loci*') which seems to have guided the choice of those who founded religious houses. And here, again, by the way, appears a marked difference between the dalesmen and the intrusive gentry — not creditable to the latter. The native dalesman, well aware of the fury with which the wind often gathers and eddies about any eminence, however trifling its elevation, never thinks of planting his house *there;* whereas the stranger, singly solicitous about the prospect or the range of lake which his gilt saloons are to command, chooses his site too often upon points better fitted for a temple of Eolus than a human dwelling-place; and he belts his house with balconies and verandahs that a mountain gale often tears away in mockery. The dalesman, wherever his choice is not circumscribed, selects a sheltered spot (a Wray,* for instance), which protects him from the winds altogether, upon one or two quarters, and on all quarters from its tornado violence; he takes good care, at the same time, to be within a few feet of a mountain beck; a caution so little heeded by some of the villa-founders, that, absolutely, in a country surcharged with water, they have sometimes found themselves driven, by sheer necessity, to the afterthought of sinking a well. The very best situation, however, in other respects, may be bad in one; and sometimes finds its very advantages, and the beetling crags which

* *Wraie* is the old Danish or Icelandic word for *angle*. Hence the many Wrays in the Lake District.

protect its rear, obstructions the most permanent to the ascent of smoke; and it is in the contest with these natural baffling repellents of the smoke, and in the variety of artifices for modifying its vertical, or for accomplishing its lateral escape, that have arisen the large and graceful variety of chimney models.

VI.

MR. MALTHUS AND "THE MEASURE OF VALUE."

In relation to this particular subject of value, I flatter myself that in a paper expressly applied to the exposure of Mr. Malthus's blunders in his "Political Economy," I have made it impossible for Mr. Malthus, even though he should take to his assistance seven worse logicians than himself, to put down my light with their darkness. Meantime, as a labour of shorter compass, I will call the reader's attention to the following blunder, in a later work of Mr. Malthus's, viz., a pamphlet of eighty pages, entitled the "Measure of Value, Stated and Applied," published in the spring of the present year (1823). The question proposed in this work is the same as that already discussed in the "Political Economy," viz., What is the measure of value? But the answer to it is different: in the "Political Economy," the measure of value was determined to be a mean between corn and labour; in this pamphlet Mr. Malthus retracts that opinion, and (finally, let us hope) settles it to his own satisfaction that the true meaning is labour; not the quantity of labour, observe, which will produce X, but the quantity which X will command. Upon these two answers,

and the delusions which lie at their root, I shall here forbear to comment; because I am now chasing Mr. Malthus's *logical* blunders; and these delusions are not so much logical as economic. What I now wish the reader to attend to is the blunder involved in the question itself; because that blunder is not economic but logical. The question is—What is the measure of value? I say that the phrase—"Measure of Value"—is an equivocal phrase; and, in Mr. Malthus's use of it, means indifferently that which determines value, in relation to the *principium essendi*, and that which determines value, in relation to the *principium cognoscendi*. Here, perhaps, the reader will falsely suppose that I have some design upon his eyes, and wish to blind him with learned dust. But, if he thinks that, he is in the wrong box. I will and must express scholastic notions by scholastic phrases; but having once done this, I am then ready to descend into the arena with no other weapon than plain English can furnish. Let us therefore translate "*Measure of Value*" into "*that which determines value;*" and in this shape we shall detect the ambiguity of which I complain. For I say that the word *determines* may be taken subjectively for what determines X in relation to our knowledge, or objectively for what determines X in relation to itself. Thus, if I were to ask, "What determined the length of the race-course?" and the answer were—"The convenience of spectators, who could not have seen the horses at a greater distance," or "The choice of the subscribers," then it is plain that, by the word "determined," I was understood to mean "determined objectively," *i.e.*, in relation to the existence of the object: in other words, What *caused* the racecourse to be this length rather than another length? but, if the answer were—"an actual admeasurement," it would then be plain that by the word "determined" I had been understood to mean,

"determined subjectively," *i.e.*, in relation to our knowledge, What ascertained it? Now, in the objective sense of the phrase "determiner of value," the measure of value will mean *the ground of value;* in the subjective sense, it will mean *the criterion of value.* Mr. Malthus will allege that he is at liberty to use it in which sense he pleases. Grant that he is, but not therefore in both. Has he then used it in both? He will, perhaps, deny that he has, and will contend that he has used it in the latter sense as equivalent to the *ascertainer* or *criterion of value.* I answer, No; for, omitting a more particular examination of his use in this place, I say that his use of any word is peremptorily and in defiance of his private explanation to be extorted from the use of the corresponding term in him whom he is opposing. Now, he is opposing Mr. Ricardo: his *labour which* X *commands,* is opposed to Mr. Ricardo's *quantity of labour which will produce* X. Call the first A, the last B. Now, in making B the determiner of value, Mr. Ricardo means that B is the ground of value: *i.e.*, that B is the answer to the question—What makes this hat of more value than that pair of shoes? But if Mr. Malthus means by A the same thing, then, by his own confession, he has used the term *measure of value* in two senses: on the one hand, if he does not mean the same thing, but simply the *criterion* of value, then he has not used the word in any sense which opposes him to Mr. Ricardo. And yet he advances the whole on that footing. On either ground, therefore, he is guilty of a logical error, which implies that, so far from answering his own question, he did not know what his own question was.

VII.

"Anglo-German Dictionaries," and the little passage on the "Moral Effects of Revolution;" which follow, appeared in the "London Magazine" for 1823, and, so far as we are aware, have never been reprinted. We, therefore, gladly present them here, as we believe the reader will appreciate the humour of the one as much as the deep thought and suggestiveness of the other :—

ANGLO-GERMAN DICTIONARIES.

The German dictionaries, compiled for the use of Englishmen studying that language, are all bad enough, I doubt not, even in this year 1823; but those of a century back are the most ludicrous books that ever mortal read: *read*, I say, for they are well worth reading, being often as good as a jest-book. In some instances, I am convinced that the compilers (Germans living in Germany) had a downright hoax put upon them by some facetious Briton whom they had consulted; what is given as the English equivalent for the German word being not seldom a pure coinage that never had any existence out of Germany. Other instances there are in which the words, though not of foreign manufacture, are almost as useless to the English student as if they were; slang words, I mean, from the slang vocabulary, current about the latter end of the seventeenth century. These must have been laboriously culled from the works of Tom Browne, Sir Roger L'Estrange, Echard, Jeremy Collier, and others from 1660 to 1700, who were the great masters of this *vernacular* English (as it might emphatically be called, with a reference to the primary *

* What I mean is this: Vernacular, from *verna*, a slave born in his master's house. 1. The homely idiomatic language in opposition to any vexed jargon, or *lingua franca*, spoken by an imported slave.

meaning of the word *vernacular*);[2] and I verily believe that, if any part of this slang has become, or ever should become, a dead language to the English critic, his best guide to the recovery of its true meaning will be the German dictionaries of Bailey, Arnold, &c., in their earliest editions. By one of these, the word *Potztausend* (a common German oath) is translated, to the best of my remembrance, thus:—'Udzooks, Udswiggers, Udswoggers, Bublikins, Boblikins, Splitterkins,' &c., and so on, with a large choice of other elegant varieties. Here, I take it, our friend the hoaxer had been at work. But the drollest example I have met with of their slang is in the following story told me by Mr. Coleridge:—About the year 1794, a German, recently imported into Bristol, happened to hear of Mrs. X., a wealthy widow. He thought it would be a good speculation to offer himself to the lady's notice as well qualified to 'succeed' to the late Mr. X., and accordingly waited on the lady with that intention. Having no great familiarity with English, he provided himself with a copy of one of the dictionaries I have mentioned; and, on being announced to the lady, he determined to open his proposal with this introductory sentence: 'Madam, having heard that Mr. X. late your husband, is dead—' but coming to the last word 'gestorben' (dead), he was at a loss for the English equivalent, so, hastily pulling out his dictionary (a huge 8vo), he turned to the word 'sterben' (to die), and there found,—but what he found will be best collected from the dialogue which followed, as reported by the lady:—

"*German.* 'Madam, hahfing heard that Mein Herr X. late your man is—' (these words he kept chiming over as if

2. Hence, generally, the pure mother-tongue as opposed to the tongue corrupted by false refinement. By vernacular English, therefore, in the primary sense, I mean such homely English as is banished from books and polite conversation to Billingsgate and Wapping.

to himself, until he arrived at No. 1 of the interpretations of 'sterben,' when he roared out, in high glee at his discovery), 'dis, dat is—has *kicked the bucket.*

"*Widow* (with astonishment). '"Kicked the bucket," sir! what—'

"*German.* 'Ah! mein Gott!—alway Ich make mistake: I vou'd have said—' (beginning again with the same solemnity of tone),—'Since dat Mein Herr X. hav—*hopped de twig*—' (which words he screamed out with delight, certain that he had now hit the nail upon the head).

"*Widow.* 'Upon my word, sir, I am at a loss to understand you: "Kicked the bucket," and "Hopped the twig!"'

"*German* (perspiring with panic). 'Ah, madam! von—two—tree—ten tousand pardon; vat sad, wicket dictionary I haaf, dat alway bring me in trouble; but now you shall hear;'—(and then, recomposing himself solemnly for a third effort, he began as before): 'Madam, since I did hear, or wash hearing, dat Mein Herr X., late your man, haaf—' (with a triumphant shout), 'haaf, I say, *gone to Davy's locker*—'

"Further he would have gone, but the widow could stand no more; this nautical phrase, familiar to the streets of Bristol, allowed her no longer to misunderstand his meaning, and she quitted the room in a tumult of laughter, sending a servant to show her unfortunate suitor out of the house with his false friend the dictionary, whose help he might, perhaps, invoke for the last time, on making his exit in the curses, 'Udswoggers, Boblikins, Bublikins, Splitterkins!'

"N.B. As test words for trying a *modern* German dictionary I will advise the student to look for the words, *Beschwichtigen*, *Kulesse*, and *Mansarde*. The last is origi-

nally French, but the first is a true German word; and, on a question arising about its etymology at the house of a gentleman in Edinburgh, could not be found in any one out of five or six modern Anglo-German dictionaries."

VIII.

MORAL EFFECTS OF REVOLUTIONS.

In revolutionary times, as where civil war prevails in a country, men are much worse, as moral beings, than in quiet and untroubled states of peace. So much is matter of history. The English, under Charles II., after twenty years' agitation and civil tumults; the Romans, after Sylla and Marius, and the still more bloody proscriptions of the triumvirates; the French, after the wars of the League and the storms of the Revolution, were much changed for the worse, and exhibited strange relaxations of the moral principle. But why? What is the philosophy of the case? Some will think it sufficiently explained by the necessity of witnessing so much bloodshed—the hearths and the very graves of their fathers polluted by the slaughter of their countrymen—the *acharnement*, which characterises civil contests (as always the quarrels of friends are the fiercest)—and the licence of wrong which is bred by war and the majesties of armies. Doubtless this is part of the explanation. But is this all? Mr. Coleridge has referred to the subject in "The Friend;" but, to the best of my remembrance, only noticing it as a fact. Fichté, the celebrated German philosopher, has given us his view of it ("Idea of War," p. 15); and it is so ingenious that it deserves mention; it is this:—"Times of revolution force men's minds inwards; hence they are led, amongst other things, to

meditate on morals with reference to their own conduct. But to subtilise too much upon this subject must always be ruinous to morality, with all understandings that are not very powerful, *i.e.*, with the majority, because it terminates naturally in a body of maxims, a specious and covert self-interest, whereas, when men meditate less, they are apt to act more from natural feeling, in which the natural goodness of the heart often interferes to neutralize or even to overbalance its errors."

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CORRIGENDA.

Vol. I., page 35, line 16 from top, "Louthenberg" should be "Loutherbourg."

,, ,, 64, line 3 from top, "Archididasculus" should be "Archididascalus."

,, 65, line 14 from bottom, "Mary's" should be "John's."

,, 112, line 3 from bottom of footnote, "Mr." should be "Sir."

,, 371-6, inverted commas should be supplied at opening of each paragraph of large type, ending with the word "you" in fourth line of page 376.

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